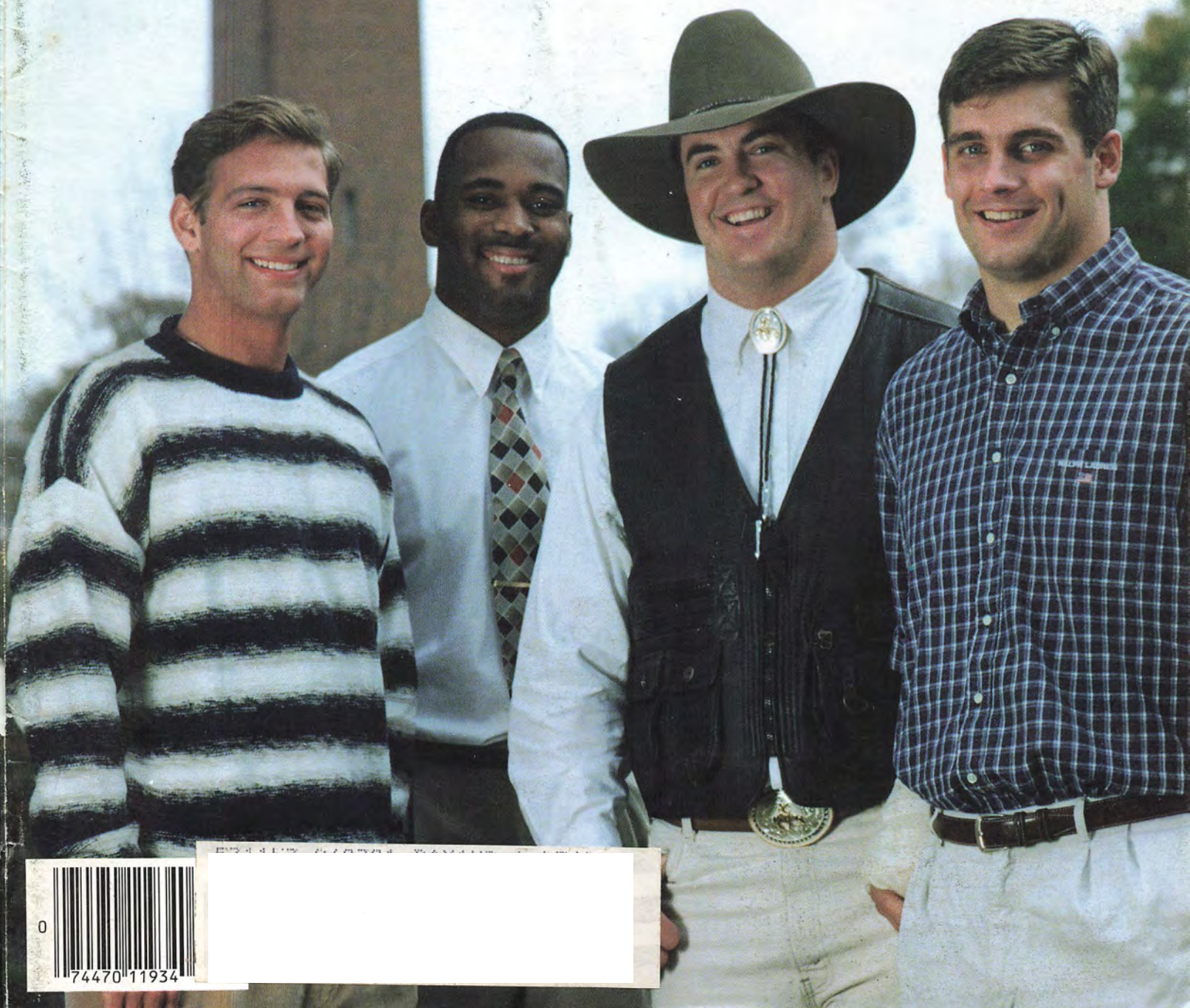


'BAMA

INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE

JANUARY, 1996

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 1

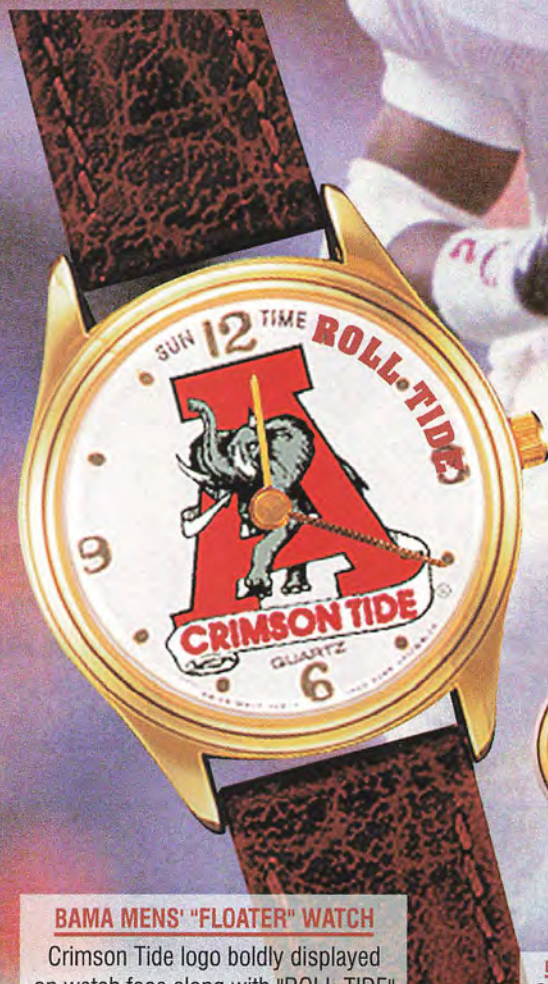


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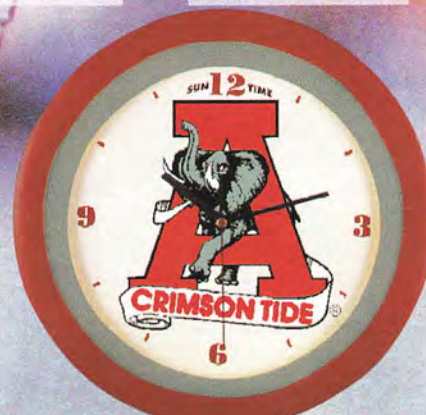
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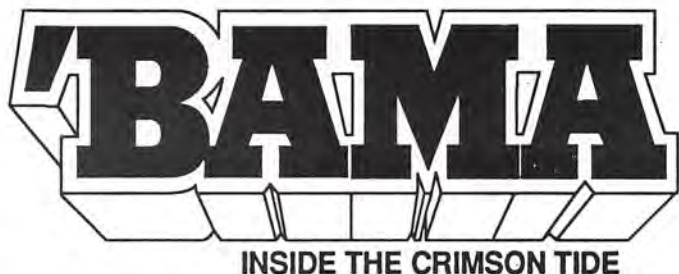
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'BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide/JANUARY '96



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Barry Fikes Photo



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Is Alabama's football program in some kind of turmoil? The lengthy NCAA investigation has finally been put to rest with Alabama able to claim a victory, but all sorts of rumors continue to swirl.

by Kirk McNair

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Football Seniors: It's Another Group Of Winners

A rite of winter is the passing of another group of football seniors. The men who played their final Crimson Tide football games in 1995 were big winners with numerous accomplishments.

by Kirk McNair

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Chris Hood: Heir Apparent At Defensive End

Chris Hood played well enough in his first Crimson Tide season to earn a few starting assignments, regular playing time and SEC All-Freshman Team honors. He's big and fast and should be even better as a sophomore, when he could be either an end or a tackle.

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Fernando Bryant: He Played Because He Understood

True freshman Fernando Bryant broke into Alabama's starting line-up at left cornerback in 1995, the only true freshman to start on offense or defense. Bryant was quick to pick up the Crimson Tide defensive scheme, perhaps in part because his high school team used the Bill Oliver system.

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Anthony Brown: The Point Is Not Scoring Points

Anthony Brown was a perimeter player who missed most of his playing opportunities because of injuries. Now he's well and he's also got a new role, that of an inside player. As a senior he wants to lead by playing good defense and rebounding.

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Although Alabama is interested primarily in big men in this football recruiting season, Bama recruiters are joining those from throughout the nation in checking out the skill position football players so prevalent in the Southeast.

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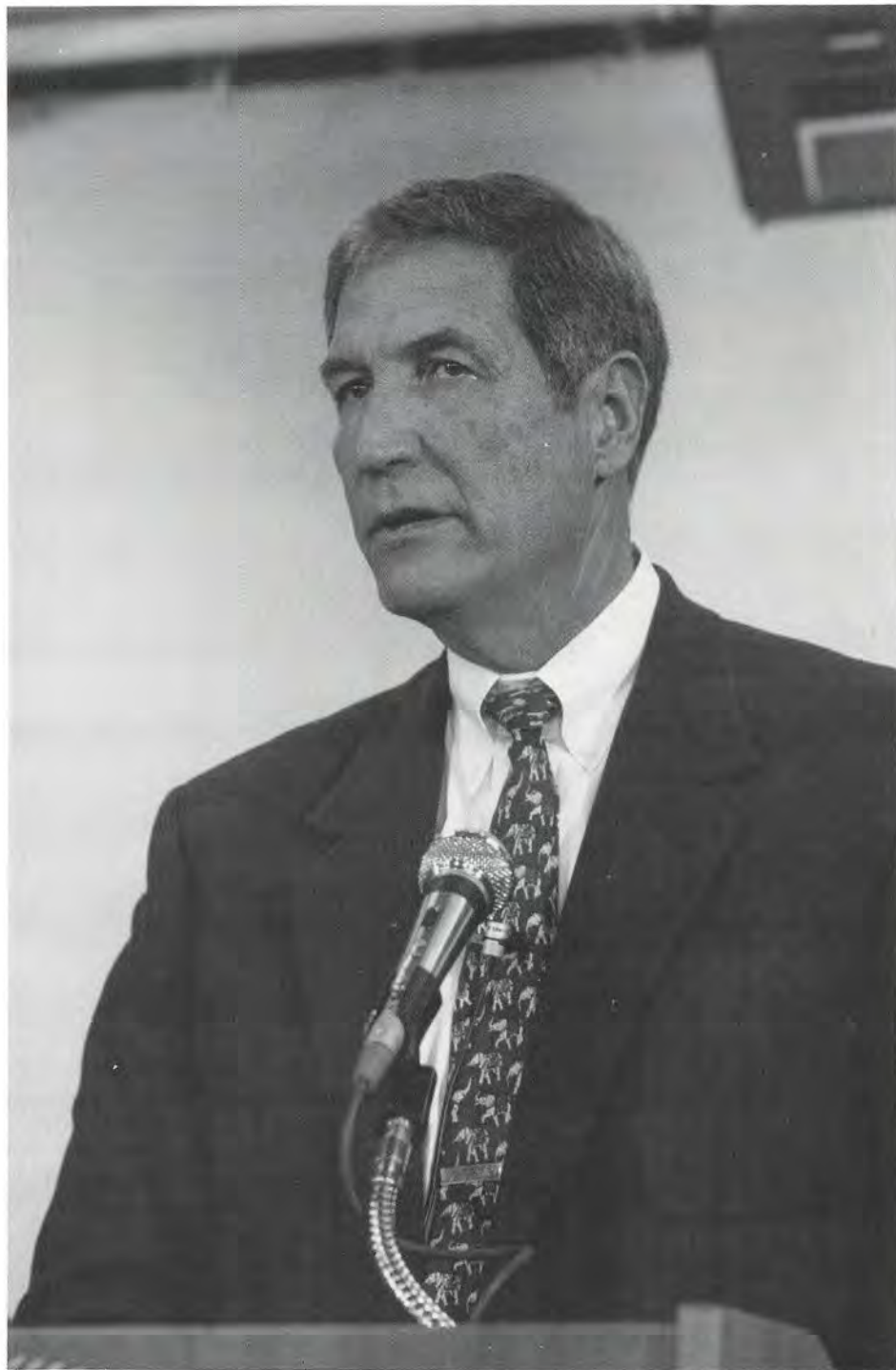
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Separating Fact From Fiction

by Kirk McNair

The NCAA investigation is over, but rumors regarding Alabama football continue



So, have you heard any rumors regarding the Alabama football situation? While it would seem that the end of the NCAA vs. Alabama battle and the statement by Crimson Tide Head Football Coach Gene Stallings that he would be back next season would have cleared the air around Tuscaloosa, talk continues to swirl on a number of fronts.

There are some sure things.

Alabama coaches have been on the recruiting trail. Indeed, some signings were to begin as early as December 20 when mid-year transfer scholarships could be offered. These are particularly important to Alabama, which can sign only 12 new players in February. However, Bama can replace two players (Kareem McNeal and Blair Canale) lost to injuries with mid-year transfer scholarships between December 20 and the beginning of spring classes, which is January 8. Ideally, big junior college linemen could be found for these grants. However, in order to sign a mid-year transfer scholarship, the junior college player must be on schedule for graduation. Few are.

One who is is defensive end Michael Myers, a 6-4, 275-pound defensive end at Hinds Junior College in Raymond, Mississippi. Myers originally signed with Ole Miss, but was not considering the Rebels. Alabama, Tennessee, LSU, Oklahoma and Auburn got official visits from Myers and he was expected to choose from those and sign by Christmas.

Alabama may offer a scholarship to a walk-on player currently on campus. There is a belief that Brenon Meadows, a 6-3, 285-pound center might receive a grant. Meadows, who prepped at Birmingham Berry, spent two years as a starting guard at Louisville, transferred to Alabama this fall and spent the season as a center on the scout team.

Meanwhile, returning Alabama players

Alabama Head Football Coach Gene Stallings was on hand to discuss Alabama's successful appeal of NCAA sanctions, but also announced he would return in 1996.

Barry Fikes Photo

'BAMA, Inside The Crimson Tide/JANUARY '96



Bill Oliver

will begin off-season workouts January 15 under the direction of Head Strength and Conditioning Coach LeBaron Caruthers. And spring training isn't far away.

Alabama once again will have a break in its spring football practice. Because of Alabama's school calendar, which has early final examinations in the spring, Alabama will open spring training on March 7 (the same day the Southeastern Conference Basketball Tournament begins in New Orleans) and finish with the A-Day Game in Bryant-Denny Stadium on April 13.

The University's spring break is March 22-31.

Spring training consists of 15 practices (including the spring game) with 10 of those practices in full gear.

Stallings was part of the contingent on hand when it was revealed that The University had made history in gaining significant relief from NCAA penalties against the program. However, what Stallings had to say regarding the penalties was far less notable than what he had to say about himself.

Bama's head coach had caused some consternation when late in the season he said he would make a decision at the end of the fall regarding his future. As Stallings noted, he never brought the subject up, but when he was asked he said he wasn't going to say something and then have it not be true. In a stance somewhat reminiscent of former Tide Coach Bill Curry's "walk on the woods" before deciding to leave Alabama for Kentucky, Stallings said he didn't want to make a decision when he was tired, that he would take

time after the season to examine the situation, what was best for him and for The University. He went to his ranch in Texas for a few days following the season, and when he returned, in time for the result of the decision of the NCAA Infractions Appeals Committee he said he would be back.

While there were no "ifs," "ands" or "buts" in Stallings' statement, street talk insisted the matter was not closed, that a significant number of members of The University Board of Trustees wanted Stallings' out, that prominent alumni were raising money to buy up the rest of Stallings' contract and replace him with Bama Defensive Coordinator Bill Oliver.

At least one of those "prominent alumni" expected to ante up a million or two to oust Stallings was said to be Paul Bryant, Jr. Bryant has done very well for himself and isn't adverse to making donations to The University, but it's almost laughable that he would be involved in a plot against Stallings. Probably no alumnus was more influential in Stallings' selection as Bama's head coach than was Bryant.

While Stallings seems to have cleared the air on his own situation, it appears there would cease to be life on Earth as we know it without rumors regarding the Alabama football coaching situation. There have been several staff meetings since the end of the football season, and reports have it that no coaches have emerged from those meetings with black eyes or bleeding noses, an indication that the "fighting" we hear so much about may not be quite so intense.

That doesn't mean there won't be coaching changes. There is always the chance that assistants on a successful staff will have other opportunities, and that could be the case with some Alabama assistants. However, only one looking at Bama's staff situation with rose-colored glasses would suggest that alteration in the coaching staff is predicated solely on better opportunity. Alabama is a special place for football coaches. Without a promotion, there are virtually no college assistant coaching jobs better than those at Bama. Thus, any moves from Alabama without a major promotion for the coach must be considered as a problem, either Stallings having a problem with the assistant or the assistant having a problem with Stallings.

Bama's head coach has a good line when he talks about being fired as head coach of the Phoenix Cardinals. "It wasn't Mr. Bidwell's (the owner of the team, William Bidwell) job to please me," Stallings said. "It



Homer Smith

was my job to please Mr. Bidwell." In all probability, if an assistant leaves this year it is likely because he didn't please Mr. Stallings.

At the head of the list of those likely to be lost is Offensive Coordinator Homer Smith. Smith doesn't have to prove himself. He has a long list of successes, including his previous stint at Alabama under Curry. However, no one believes that Smith and Stallings have been on the same page in developing Alabama's offense, an offense that has lacked in almost every respect. The two agree on the running game, that being able to run the ball (and, specifically, being able to run it between the tackles) is the surest way to success. However, when Alabama couldn't run this year, which was frequent during the early part of the season, the passing game couldn't pick up the load.

One would have to be naive to not understand that rumors about Alabama's coaching staff are fueled by the season. Not the holiday season, but the recruiting season.

The news from the Infractions Appeals Committee was mostly good, a victory for certain for The University, though not a total victory since Alabama will not be going to a bowl game this year. Stallings was particularly disappointed about that for the seniors, but in the major scheme of things it was not a significant loss. Alabama has played in more bowl games and more major bowl games than any other school, and the addition of a Peach Bowl would be insignificant to that record.

However, because Alabama is not eligible for a bowl game, the Tide was dropped from

the poll of coaches conducted by CNN/USA Today. Bama remained 21st in the Associated Press poll.

The Infractions Appeals Committee vindicated former Faculty Chairman of Athletics Tom Jones and overturned two of the three sanctions against the football program. Alabama's probation will end a year earlier than the original penalty called for, on August 2, 1997, and the Tide will be able to sign 25 new football players in February, 1997, nine more than would have been permitted under the sanctions imposed by the NCAA Infractions Committee. The only sanction which The University appealed which was not agreed to by the Appeals Committee was the bowl ban for this year. (For all practical purposes, Alabama's probation ends at the conclusion of the signing period in February.)

Alabama's success before the Appeals Committee was significant in that it was the

first time in the three-year existence of the committee that it had granted meaningful relief from sanctions imposed by the NCAA Infractions Committee.

Still, Alabama's penalty remains extraordinarily harsh. Compare the two violations, both involving outside influences with no relationship to The University, with essentially the same penalties against Miami (though the Hurricanes didn't have to forfeit games as did Bama). Miami's violations involved over 100 athletes, hundreds of thousands of dollars, and drugs.

The NCAA investigation of Alabama lasted almost three years. The University agreed that two violations had occurred, one involving former Alabama player Gene Jelks obtaining loans in excess of those allowed by the NCAA and The University not having proper documentation of those loans, and one involving former Tider Antonio Langham signing with an agent and then

playing in 11 football games in 1993. The NCAA Investigative Staff, working in conjunction with Alabama in an attempt to resolve the case through Summary Disposition, said the violations were inadvertent and that University officials had cooperated fully in the investigation. However, the Infractions Committee did not accept that finding and added a third surprise charge of a violation of ethical conduct against Jones.

The penalties imposed by the Infractions Committee were three years of probation, a loss of a total of 33 scholarships (Alabama was permitted to sign only 14 players this year, will be allowed to sign only 12 in February, and would have been limited to only 16 in 1997, a total of 42 over a three-year period in which a total of 75 would ordinarily be allowed), a bowl ban for 1995 and forfeiture of eight victories and one tie in the 1993 season. Alabama appealed only

27 Seniors Among Bama's 81 Football Lettermen

The Alabama football team will have its annual awards banquet January 16 at which time varsity letters will be given. Those earning letters in 1995 are:

Senior safety Tom Aiken of Lithonia, Georgia; sophomore running back Curtis Alexander of Memphis, Tennessee; senior offensive guard Maurice Belser of Cordova; junior defensive end Darrell Blackburn of Huntsville; senior defensive end Vann Bodden of Moss Point, Mississippi; senior split end Curtis Brown of John's Island, South Carolina; senior defensive end Elverett Brown of Montgomery; senior defensive tackle Shannon Brown of Millbrook; freshman cornerback Fernando Bryant of Murfreesboro, Tennessee; junior linebacker Tyrell Buckner of Denison, Texas; senior quarterback Brian Burgdorf of Cedartown, Georgia; senior defensive end Kendrick Burton of Hartselle; senior flanker Blair Canale of Memphis; junior center John Causey of Hayneville; senior linebacker Hunter Christian of Tuscaloosa; junior center Jackson Cook of Cullman;

Junior linebacker Fernando Davis of Aberdeen, Mississippi; junior offensive tackle Pete DiMario of Tuscaloosa; junior defensive end Anthony Dowdell of Columbus, Georgia; freshman linebacker Chris Edwards of Bessemer; freshman wide receiver Michael Feagin of Greenville; senior linebacker Howie Fell of Birmingham; junior linebacker Lamont Floyd of Orange Park, Florida; senior cornerback Brad Ford of Dadeville; freshman quarterback Warren Foust of Midwest City, Oklahoma; sophomore offensive guard Will Friend of Philadelphia, Mississippi; senior flanker Rondi Gibson of Brewton; sophomore flanker Chad Goss of Warner Robbins, Georgia; senior safety Mark Grobe of Cullman; freshman split end Calvin Hall of Gallatin, Tennessee; junior tight end Patrick Hape of Killen; freshman linebacker Steven Harris of Town Creek; junior cornerback Tracy High of Pontotoc, Mississippi; sophomore offensive tackle Joel Holliday of Six Mile, South Carolina; freshman defensive end Chris Hood of Town Creek; freshman linebacker Eddie Hunter of Mobile;

Junior strong safety Kevin Jackson of Dothan; senior tight end Tony Johnson of Como, Mississippi; sophomore offensive tackle Chris Jordan of Jackson; sophomore defensive tackle Eric Kerley of

Birmingham; senior split end Chad Key of Parrish; sophomore quarterback Freddie Kitchens of Attalla; junior center Chester Lewis of Tuscaloosa; freshman running back Montoya Madden of Town Creek; senior flanker Toderick Malone of Attalla; senior offensive tackle Kareem McNeal of Tuskegee; junior defensive end Kelvin Moore of Daphne; senior fullback Josh Niblett of Demopolis; senior defensive tackle Matt Parker of Lawton, Oklahoma; junior offensive guard Jeremy Pennington of Vernon; junior defensive tackle Ozell Powell of Greenville; senior placekicker Michael Proctor of Pelham; junior safety Jeremy Pruitt of Rainsville;

Sophomore center Michael Ray of Boaz; sophomore cornerback Marlon Reyes of Mexico City, Mexico; senior strong safety Mike Reynolds of Centerville; sophomore running back Dennis Riddle of Tuscaloosa; sophomore linebacker Dwayne Rudd of Batesville, Mississippi; sophomore tight end Rod Rutledge of Birmingham; junior safety Cedric Samuel of Demopolis; freshman fullback Ed Scissum of Attalla; senior offensive tackle Rory Segrest of Waycross, Georgia; senior tight end Kevin Sherrer of Cleveland; sophomore strong safety Andre Short of LaGrange, Georgia; freshman cornerback Kelvin Sigler of Mobile; freshman fullback Trevis Smith of Montgomery; freshman offensive tackle Sage Spree of Boligee; junior linebacker Ralph Staten of Semmes; junior running back Brian Steger of New Market; junior punter Hayden Stockton of Double Springs;

Junior linebacker John Tanks of Butler; senior offensive tackle Bryan Thornton of Mobile; senior running back Jeff Torrence of Atmore; sophomore cornerback Deshea Townsend of Batesville, Mississippi; sophomore quarterback Lance Tucker of Fayette; freshman flanker Michael Vaughn of Clarksdale, Mississippi; freshman linebacker Granison Wagstaff of Enterprise; sophomore defensive end Edgar Walker of Dothan; senior linebacker John Walters of Dallas, Texas; junior placekicker William Watts of Pleasant Grove; junior flanker Marcell West of Niceville, Florida; junior offensive guard Laron White of Courtland; and freshman safety Owen Winston of Montgomery.

The 81 lettermen include 27 seniors, 21 juniors, 16 sophomores, and 17 freshmen (including four true freshmen).

three of those sanctions: probation in 1997-98, the loss of scholarships in 1997, and the bowl ban this year. University President Dr. Roger Sayers said "there is no reason to second guess" whether Alabama should have appealed for more relief.

In overturning three of the four appealed elements of the Infractions Committee, the Infractions Appeals Committee report said two of the penalties, "the third year of probation and the reduction in the number of initial financial aid awards in football by nine during 1997-98 are excessive and inappropriate."

While a case can still be made that Alabama lost 24 football scholarships, in truth Bama would rarely sign the full limit of 25 in a year because of the overall limit of 85. The NCAA wanted Alabama to be at no more than 81 scholarshiped players (hence the convoluted formula of reductions), and with the return of the nine scholarships in 1995 the Tide should be able to stay around the 80 mark throughout the penalty period.

The Infractions Appeals Committee, in a political stance worthy of any NCAA committee, used only one of three points to exonerate Jones. The University's position was that the Infractions Committee had not exercised due process by its failure to notify Jones or The University of the charge, that the facts did not warrant the charge, and that the finding was inappropriate to the evidence. The Appeals Committee said it found procedural error, and so did not consider the other two points. However, upon questioning, Marshall Criser, the acting chairman of the Appeals Committee, said that Jones has a completely clear record insofar as the NCAA is concerned.

Not being eligible for a bowl game this year is also a loss of significant revenue for Alabama's athletics department. It has been estimated that the Southeastern Conference this year will have bowl revenues that will result in payments to each SEC member of more than \$1 million, perhaps as much as \$2 million. An SEC rule for many years has been that if a team is not eligible for one of the revenue producing events (television, bowl games, basketball tournament participation), that school shall not share in that revenue. In the past, violators have appealed to have revenue restored and the conference has routinely voted to give the violating team a half share. However, last year the SEC made a rule that it would no longer make that partial payment. Thus, Alabama, which has provided more bowl revenue to the conference than any other two teams combined, will be the first victim of this new rule.

Trustees Approve Stadium Expansion

As expected, The University of Alabama System Board of Trustees has approved a \$22.45 million budget to build an east side upper deck at Bryant-Denny Stadium. Work on the expansion of the stadium was scheduled to begin in January and be completed in time for the 1997 season. The addition will add about 12,000 seats to the stadium, bringing capacity to about 82,000. The exact capacity won't be known until University officials make a final determination as to how many skyboxes will be included in the addition.

The stadium is not expected to be closed during the 1996 football season as it was for the major renovation and addition of 1987 when all Bama home games were played in Birmingham's Legion Field.

The Athletics Department will pay for the expansion, but has a pretty nice parachute. The governments of Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County and Northport have pledged about \$4.5 million for the expansion and Tuscaloosa businessman Paul W. Bryant, Jr., has pledged a total of \$10 million, \$1 million per year for 10 years.

The Bryant donation is on a need basis, and it is expected that most, and possibly all, of his donation will go to other facets of The University. Athletics Department officials believe that the current waiting list of those wishing to join Tide Pride (the department's fund-raising program for football ticket priority) will make sale of all the new seats an easy task.

If Bryant's gift is not needed for the stadium expansion it will go to The University's special collections library, the Bryant Museum and other campus agencies, including Bryant Scholarships, Gorgas Home, a Confederate Memorial Day program, and programs to be determined.

In appreciation, the trustees will name the special collections building, which houses archives and other artifacts, in honor of Bryant's mother, Mary Harmon Bryant.

Alabama can weather that financial storm better than can Ole Miss, which also loses SEC revenue this year.

Also on a monetary issue, Dr. Sayers said Alabama's legal bill in this matter would be in excess of \$250,000. The Athletics Department will pay that bill.

In pointing out that Alabama is the first

university to receive meaningful success in the appeals process, the report said, "In comparing this case to others, the committee observed that those cases involved numerous or repeated violations, active participation of head coaches or staff members in those violations, violations that were flagrant and deliberate and violations of recruiting rules that were intended to provide the institution a competitive advantage. The failure of institutional control in this case, while serious, did not present those elements. Also the institution in this case took appropriate corrective action and cooperated fully in the investigation, as seen in its efforts to resolve the case through the summary disposition process."

At least one question remains. While Jones was vindicated by the Infractions Appeals Committee, that vindication came nearly four months after the heinous and baseless charge against him by the Infractions Committee. In addition to the anguish and humiliation he suffered, Jones also resigned his post as Faculty Chairman of Athletics. There is no question he has the basis for a slander lawsuit against the members of the Infractions Committee. Although there is no way to know if Jones will pursue a lawsuit, it won't affect The University's relationship with the NCAA.

What in the world were the SEC coaches thinking about when they named their All-SEC team? Senior Shannon Brown was a first team selection and senior linebacker John Walters and senior placekicker Michael Proctor were second team. But where was junior Kevin Jackson? Jackson, who led the league in interceptions with five, including one for a touchdown, didn't make either the coaches' first or second team. He did make the first teams selected by the Associated Press and by the *Birmingham News*. Brown was also first team on both those squads and Walters was first team by the *Birmingham News* and sophomore cornerback Deshea Townsend was second team by the AP.

In addition to seniors Shannon Brown, Chad Key and Josh Niblett earning Academic All-SEC honors this year, sophomore quarterback Warren Foust and junior cornerback Marlon Reyes were also named to the honor squad.

Jackson was the only Bama individual leader in final SEC statistics. As a team, Alabama finished first in total defense, allowing 284.1 yards per game. Bama was also first in preventing first downs, allowing just 14.6 per game, and in defense on third

downs, allowing 28 per cent success.

Individually, Bama players show up best in the interceptions category. In addition to Jackson having five with 46 yards in returns and ranking 22nd in the nation, Deshea Townsend was tied for third with four interceptions for 40 yards and linebacker Ralph Staten was tied for sixth with three interceptions for 74 yards.

Sophomore halfback Dennis Riddle ended up eighth in rushing, averaging 88.1 yards per game and 4.1 yards per rush on 236 carries for 969 yards.

Sophomore Freddie Kitchens didn't have enough chances to qualify for SEC ranking, but senior Brian Burgdorf, who lost his starting job to Kitchens late in the year, finished seventh in the league and 31st in the nation in passing efficiency. He completed 96 of 162 attempts for 1,200 yards with nine touchdowns and seven interceptions. Burgdorf was also ninth in all-purpose yardage as he had 48 additional rushing yards.

No Tiders ranked in SEC receiving statis-



Kevin Jackson

tics, either by receptions or by yards.

Proctor was seventh in field goals with 11 made in 19 attempts.

Hayden Stockton ranked fourth in the league in punting with 64 boots for 2,617 yards, a 40.9 average.

Townsend was 10th in punt returns, 13 for 77 yards, a 5.9 yards-per-return average, while Marcell West was fifth in kickoff returns, 13 runbacks for 297 yards, a 22.9 average.

In team statistics, Alabama was 10th in total offense (333 yards per game), seventh in scoring offense (23.6 points per game), third in scoring defense (17.1), eighth in rushing offense (145.7), second in rushing defense (105.3), ninth in passing offense (187.3), second in passing defense, 12th in kickoff returns (17.5), 10th in punt returns (5.6), 10th in first downs per game (17.6), 11th in third down conversions (31 per cent), 11th in fourth down conversions (42 per cent), third in defense against fourth down conversions (38 per cent), seventh in penalty yards per game (61.9), second in quarterback sacks (36), sixth in net punting (36.8), and fourth in turnover ratio (plus five).



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It's Another Group Of Winners

by Kirk McNair

Senior class won 42 games in four years, including national title

Few Alabama football teams meet expectations. That is not an indictment of those teams. It is a testament to the goals of every Crimson Tide squad. Every Bama team wants to win every game and end the season with a national championship. It doesn't happen every year, but in part because that is the goal, it has happened at Alabama a lot more times than it has happened at other schools.

An important element of every Crimson Tide team is its seniors. Alabama Head Coach Gene Stallings, like Bama coaches before him, frequently mentioned the 1995 seniors for their leadership. When Alabama received substantial relief from NCAA sanctions, Stallings lamented that part of that relief wasn't a bowl game. "I hate it for the seniors," he said.

Stallings also had praise for the senior captains, who were elected by their teammates prior to the beginning of the season. The offensive captains are quarterback Brian Burgdorf of Cedartown, Georgia, and tight end Tony Johnson of Como, Mississippi, while the defensive captains are defensive tackle Shannon Brown of Millbrook and linebacker John Walters of Dallas, Texas.

As with every football team, all of the seniors are not equal. Some have been all-stars and will go on to professional football. Others spent their careers as members of the scout team and are known as Alabama football players only to their coaches and teammates, friends and family. But all have been a part of—indeed, essential to—Alabama football success.

Although the Seniors of 1995 had some disappointments, as freshmen they were part of the undefeated 1992 National Championship Crimson Tide. In four years they had a record of 42-7-1, which ties for fourth best in number of victories among four-year Bama classes. Only the 45 wins achieved by last year's seniors, the 44 by the class of 1980 and the 43 of the class of 1979 had more, and this group of seniors equaled the win totals by the classes of 1981, 1976, 1977 and 1978. Only 10 classes have finished with 40 or more victories.

This group of seniors played in three

Southeastern Conference Championship games and three bowl games (wins over Miami in the Sugar Bowl, North Carolina in the Gator Bowl, and Ohio State in the Citrus Bowl).

Football is not over for all of the seniors. Because Alabama was ineligible for a bowl game this year, six Tide seniors were invited to play in the Blue-Gray Game on Christmas Day in Montgomery. They are: Wide receiver Curtis Brown, defensive tackle Shannon Brown, defensive end Kendrick Burton, tight end Tony Johnson, wide receiver Toderick Malone, defensive tackle Matt Parker, placekicker Michael Proctor and linebacker John Walters.

Additionally, the Senior Bowl in Mobile on January 20 will have Shannon Brown, Burton, Malone and Proctor, and would have had tight end Tony Johnson except that Johnson suffered a separated shoulder in the final game of the season and had to undergo surgery. He will miss both of the post-season games. Nevertheless, those selected for these bowls are likely to have an opportunity to play professionally.

Most Alabama football players are highly-recruited, young men who fully expect a career at Bama to lead to the opportunity of a professional football contract. However, there are also a number who come without scholarship, hoping to beat the long odds and gain playing time and/or a scholarship.

Chad Key of Parrish was a walk-on quarterback, but wasn't likely to see much playing time as the signal-caller. He made the switch to wide receiver and became an important part of the Bama offense. He earned a scholarship and will leave with his degree after having been named Academic All-SEC the past two years. Josh Niblett of Demopolis was also a walk-on, a transfer from Southern Mississippi where he was the back-up quarterback. He was never in the quarterback picture at Alabama, but that's one of the few places he didn't see practice or playing time. In his career he was a strong safety, then a linebacker, then a tight end and finally a fullback. On his first carry, as a senior against North Carolina State, Niblett rushed for 12 yards. He, too, is a two-time Academic All-SEC performer.

Other seniors who have earned Academic All-SEC in their careers are Shannon Brown (three years), Brian Burgdorf, and Kareem McNeal of Tuskegee.

McNeal is a particularly important member of the senior class. As a junior he started every game at right offensive tackle. He had

been groomed to move to the left side this fall. However, in the summer he was involved in an automobile accident and suffered a severe back injury, ending his playing career.

Another senior who had to give up football in his final year because of injuries is Blair Canale of Memphis, who stayed with the team as a student assistant coach this year. Also serving as student assistant coaches after having to give up playing because of injuries are Rory Segrest of Waycross, Georgia, and Jeff Torrence of Atmore.

There are other senior members of this year's team who did not make the starting line-up, who may have dressed only for a game or two in their entire careers. However, they were important members of the team, players on the scout team who toil in practice to help the Tide prepare for Saturdays. They include safety Tom Aiken of Lithonia, Georgia, linebacker Hunter Christian of Tuscaloosa, linebacker Howie Fell of Birmingham, defensive back Mark Grobe of Cullman, center Ben Krapf of Newark, Delaware, strong safety Mike Reynolds of Centerville, and tight end Kevin Sherr of Cleveland.

Two members of the class were only two-year players for the Tide, coming from junior college, but both made major contributions to Bama success. Matt Parker of Lawton, Oklahoma, was a two-year regular at defensive tackle after transferring from Northeast Oklahoma. He recovered a fumble and scored a touchdown in a 14-6 win over Southern Miss in 1994. Brad Ford of Dadeville came to Bama from Fresno (California) Community College and earned a job in the secondary and on special teams. He had a critical interception return for a touchdown against Vanderbilt in a 33-25 win to start the season.

This senior class also includes a very unusual transfer. Rondi Gibson of Brewton started his career at Auburn, then transferred to Alabama, where he was a kickoff return man, halfback and wide receiver.

Almost every Alabama football team has a number of honors winners, and this one is among them. Shannon Brown is a consensus All-SEC first teamer, while placekicker Michael Proctor and linebacker John Walters were second team.

However, there are big moments in the careers of a number of the seniors.

Maurice Belser of Cordova was a two-year starter at offensive left guard and was one of five true freshmen to play on the 1992 national championship team.

Vann Bodden of Moss Point, Mississippi,

was a regular on the defensive front despite a history of injuries. He was named SEC Player of the Week for his performance in a 35-17 win over LSU in Baton Rouge in 1994.

Curtis Brown, a wide receiver from John's Island, South Carolina, will probably be remembered for ever as the man who made the touchdown-catch-that-wasn't in the final moments against Auburn. An official's mistake cost Brown a spot in Crimson Tide lore. Nevertheless, despite missing the 1993 season with a knee injury, he finished among the top five in all-time Alabama receiving statistics, making 106 receptions (third best in Tide history) for 1,571 yards (fourth).

Elverett Brown of Montgomery was plagued with leg and ankle injuries throughout his career, but made the most of a 1992 start against Auburn, making four tackles and a quarterback sack in that Bama victory.

Shannon Brown was a second team All-SEC pick as a junior. In addition to his work as a defensive tackle, he was a big man on special teams, blocking a field goal attempt that led to a dramatic touchdown in a 31-0 win over Georgia and blocking an extra point against Vanderbilt.

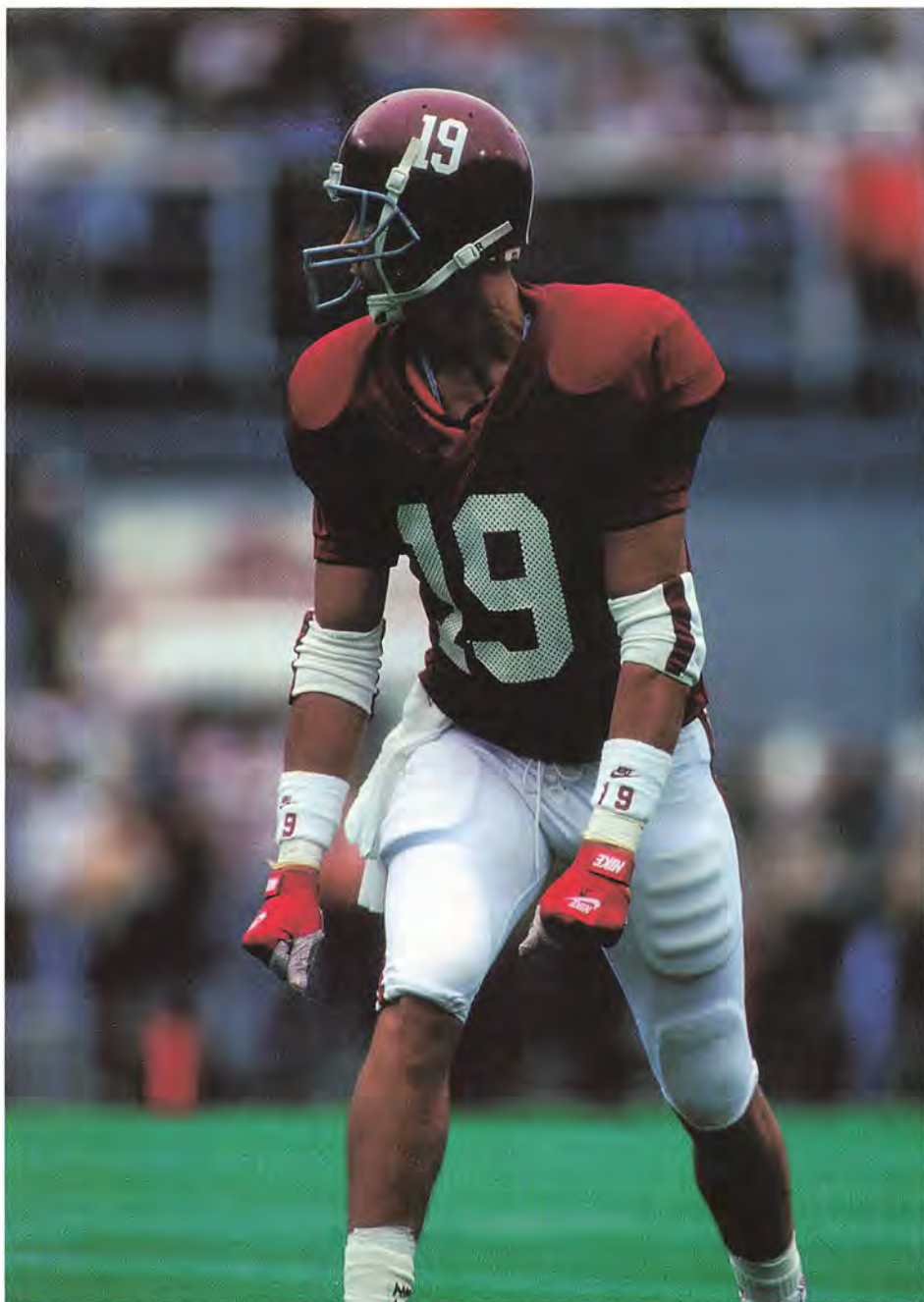
Brian Burgdorf had started a few games at quarterback prior to his senior season, most notably the 1993 Gator Bowl when he was named Most Valuable Player after leading Bama to a 24-10 win over North Carolina. He brought the Tide back to dramatic wins in the first two games of the year, against Vanderbilt and Southern Miss, with late touchdown passes.

Kendrick Burton of Hartselle suffered a dislocated knee as a sophomore, but became a regular as a junior in 1994 and this season. Burton saw action at both end and tackle and was listed as Alabama's top pro prospect.

Tony Johnson was the ultimate leader in his Alabama career, an unselfish performer on offense, a member of the special teams, captain, two-time president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and Alabama's representative on the SEC's "Good Works Team," which recognizes the superior community service efforts of league football players.

Toderick Malone of Attalla played only three years, but finished ninth all-time in receptions with 73 for 1,368 yards (seventh best in Alabama history). Malone and Curtis Brown both had 11 career touchdown receptions, tying them for sixth in Tide history. He had two dramatic touchdowns against Auburn, a 59-yard run and a 52-yard pass reception, both the longest plays of the year in those categories for Bama.

Michael Proctor of Pelham did not have as good a senior season as he would have liked as he went into a slump on field goal kicks late in the season, but for his career he was



Chad Key came to Alabama without a scholarship in hopes of being the Crimson Tide's quarterback. He ended up a scholarship wide receiver and one of the top seniors for Bama. Barry Fikes Photo

as good as any in Bama history. In his very first game he was SEC Player of the Week as he kicked four field goals in a win over Vanderbilt and he earned All-America in both 1993 and 1994. His 53-yard field goal against Ole Miss in 1993 is the longest in Alabama history without a tee and he had a dramatic game-winner against Georgia in 1994. Proctor finished as the second all-time leading scorer in Alabama history with 326 career points, including 130 consecutive successful extra point kicks.

Bryan Thornton of Mobile is one of those players that every class seems to have, a man

who spent his career trying to find his position. He spent most of his career on the defensive line, including playing against Miami in the Sugar Bowl, but ended up his senior year as a back-up offensive tackle.

John Walters was a back-up performer as a true freshman on the 1992 championship team and a starter the past two years. He was SEC Player of the Week both as a junior and senior in games against Ole Miss. In this year's Arkansas game he recorded a safety with a tackle in the end zone, one of 11 tackles he made behind the line of scrimmage as a senior.

Heir Apparent At Defensive End

by Donald F. Staffo

Upcoming sophomore is also in the picture at tackle because of his size and strength

Football coaches know that a good place in Alabama to go recruiting is Town Creek. The small town is home to Hazlewood High School, legendary for its state championship teams and for the excellent college prospects it turns out. In the past Alabama has benefitted from the likes of the Goode brothers (Kerry, Chris, Pierre and Clyde), Antonio Langham and Tarrant Lynch. The latest to travel the football pipeline to Tuscaloosa are running back Montoya Madden, linebacker Steven Harris and defensive lineman Chris Hood, all of whom played as redshirt freshmen in 1995.

While Bama recruiters knew to go to Town Creek to get Hood, it may be the Tide coaches didn't realize exactly what they had gotten. Hood was a four-year starter at linebacker for Hazlewood, an all-state selection each year, and the Class 2A Player of the Year as a senior in 1993. By then he had grown to 6-3, 240. Hood was no small child when he signed, but he has grown since then. He's now a 267-pounder who started four games as a defensive end this season and earned first team Southeastern Conference All-Freshman Team.

Hood had never heard of the All-Freshman Team before being nominated for the honor. "That's fine," he said, "but it doesn't make any difference. I've still got to go out and play."

Although he was primarily a back-up to Kendrick Burton at left end and is the heir apparent to start there in 1996, Hood also has the size and strength to possibly make the switch to defensive tackle as a sophomore. In all probability Hood will see playing time both as an end and a tackle beginning next season.

Bama coaches weren't the only ones seeking Hood's services, but recruiters from the likes of Tennessee, Auburn, Georgia Tech and North Carolina State couldn't overcome the Town Creek-Tuscaloosa connection.

"There's a rich tradition between my high school and Alabama," Hood said. "We have a lot of guys from my area who went to Alabama. If I needed to know something, I'd just go to one of them."

Hood could hardly be considered a major surprise. Throughout his redshirt year in 1994 Alabama Head Coach Gene Stallings complimented him for his play on the scout team. Then in last year's A-Day Game he earned the Dwight Stevenson Most Valuable Lineman Award as he turned in eight tackles, including two quarterback sacks.

In his first year of play he turned in 21 tackles, two tackles for losses, three quarterback sacks, two pass break-ups and 10 quarterback pressures.

"After redshirting last year, I wanted to show the coaches what I could do," Hood said. "I'm satisfied with how much I played and how I've progressed so far."

However, better things are expected of Hood. If he stays at end, he's the odds-on favorite to be the starter. If he moves to tackle he'll be battling Ozell Powell. Late in the season Alabama had several games in which a defensive front of all-returning players was regularly in the lineup—Powell and Eric Kerley at tackles and Hood and Darrell Blackburn at ends.

"I've worked hard," Hood said. "I don't really know if I'll be listed as the starter in the spring, because there are so many players who can play. I don't have a starting position yet. I want to be a better football player. Right now I'm just a basic football player. As time goes on, I hope to get better. I have to lift more weights during the off-season and get stronger. I know that."

Hood currently bench presses over 300 pounds and squats 435.

To get better, Hood knows that he must improve his technique. "I have to try to get off the blocker better," he said. "I have to get my hands inside on the offensive tackle to gain control. I just have to keep working hard."

No one doubts that Hood will improve. And, like anyone who starts for a football team the caliber of Alabama, Hood hopes one day to play professionally. However, that's a long time away, and Hood said, "If I'm good enough, I hope to play a little more ball, but I'm not thinking about that right now. I want to play better for Alabama and I want to graduate." The human performance major hopes to eventually be a teacher and coach.

Assistant Coach Mike Dubose, who tutors the defensive linemen, acknowledged Hood's progress and, for the most part, agrees with his young defender's self-assessment.

"Chris made some progress during the season, but what stands out is his inconsistency," Dubose said. "That comes from a lack of playing time, a lack of repetitions, and a lack of his understanding what he needs to do."

Dubose said, "The best thing Chris does is run. He has excellent speed (4.8



Chris Hood earned plenty of playing time and some starting time at defensive end as a redshirt freshman in 1995. He will go into 1996 as the number one left defensive end and is also expected to get a look at defensive tackle. Barry Fikes Photo

in the 40) for a defensive lineman, good body control, and good athleticism for the position. Now he's depending on his athletic skills, but to be a complete player he's got to get strong and study the game of football. Football has become such a science inside. It's not played straight ahead. It's a game of angles. Chris needs to understand the angles involved in offensive and defensive line play.

"He's got an awful lot of ability, but how well he develops will depend on what he sees and how he reacts to that. He needs to understand the angles of the offensive lineman's shoulders and what those shoulders are telling him, rather than just looking to find out where the football is."

Dubose said that Hood began to get a

better grasp of things during the Georgia game. "He came in and played well," Dubose said. "He's always shown flashes, but earlier he'd make some plays, but he'd give up some plays. He would have a tendency to give up gap responsibility and try to run to the football. He had to learn to play within the system."

Dubose also said that Hood would be listed number one at left defensive end when spring drills begin, "but," Dubose added, "he will also be bracketed at first team left tackle with Ozell Powell."

Although Hood worked briefly at right defensive end, the decision to make him a left end was a physical one. Hood is blind in his left eye, the result of an accident in a high school basketball game (he was also all-state in basketball). A teammate accidentally stuck

his finger in Hood's eye and the result was a detached retina. "It bothered me in football as far as looking to one side of the field," he said. "I had to get my head around more."

From right end, Hood can see less than half the field, and can't see the ball being snapped. From left end he can see nearly the entire field.

Dubose said, "We lost quite a few tackles this year. We only have two scholarship players returning (Powell and Kerley). Because of the lack of numbers inside, we'll probably have to move Chris around. He'll be one of the big guys at defensive end, so he's the one we'll be looking at to go down inside and play some tackle."

Dubose said that Hood is "a super young man, pleasant to be around."

Fernando Bryant:

He Played Because He Understood

by John Barnes

After a fine freshman year,
things could be special

Fernando Bryant is a rare breed. Breaking into the Tide's starting lineup as a true freshman, Bryant has accomplished what few before him have.

Like Deshea Townsend in 1994, Bryant demonstrated the talent and intelligence necessary to understand Defensive Coordinator and Secondary Coach Bill Oliver's scheme and step in as the starting cornerback opposite Townsend.

The adjustment to Oliver's myriad coverages and recognitions has overwhelmed many a player at Alabama. Bryant, however, had a bit of an advantage. "At my high school, (Riverdale in Murfreesboro, Tennessee) our defense is based on Alabama's," said Bryant. "Our coach came to a lot of clinics down here and we've been working out of Alabama's scheme for several years."

Obviously, the system worked as Bryant led Coach Gary Rankin's Riverdale team to a perfect 15-0 record and the state championship his senior year.

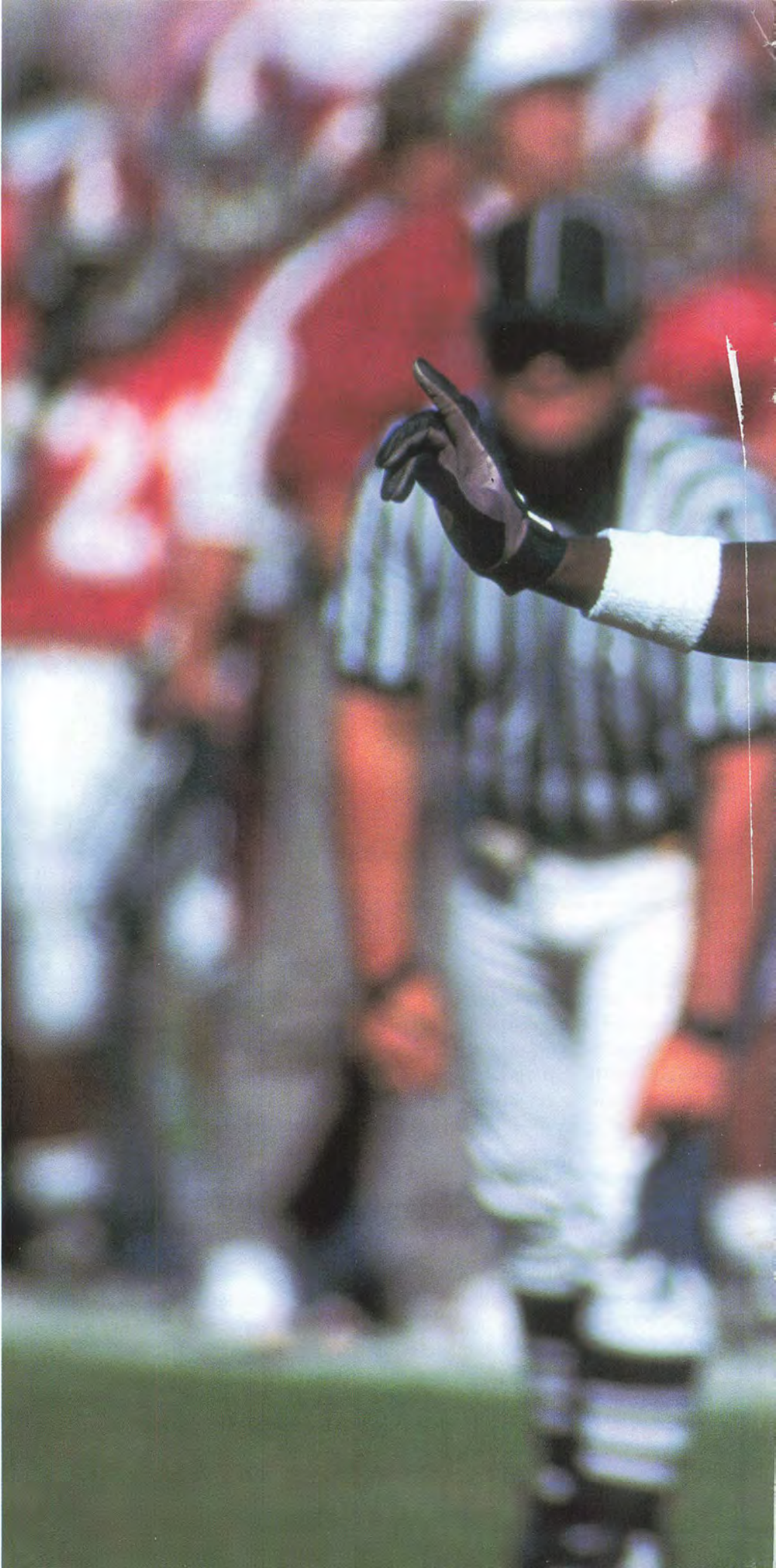
Although he had a leg up on the competition, covering Southeastern Conference-caliber receivers is a different ball game entirely.

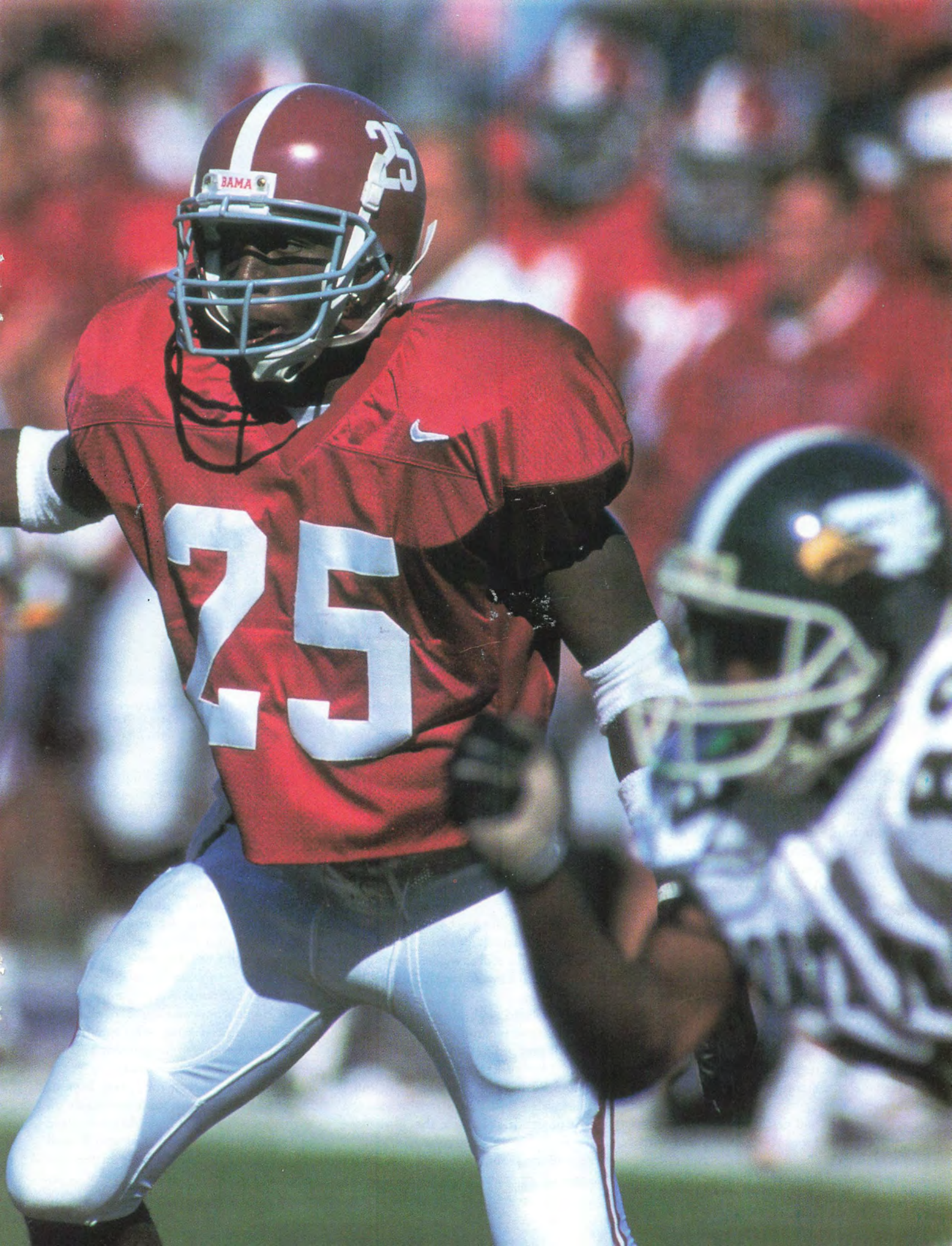
Early in the season, Bryant played primarily on special teams. Aside from some mop-up duty late in games, he spent very little time on the defensive side of the football.

Following the Tide's 41-14 drubbing at

Fernando Bryant may have a leg up on other freshmen trying to break into the Alabama secondary because his high school team had played the Bill Oliver system.

Barry Fikes Photo







Fernando Bryant had one of his best games in what is generally considered Alabama's best defensive effort of the season, the 10-3 victory over LSU. Bryant turned in eight tackles in that contest. Bryant moved into the starting lineup after the Tide's worst defensive effort of the year, a 41-14 loss to Tennessee.

Barry Fikes Photo

the hands of the Tennessee Volunteers, Tide fans and coaches alike knew changes were in the offing, especially on defense. Senior Brad Ford had begun the season as the team's starting corner. Ford's performance over the first half of the season and most notably, in the Tennessee game, left Oliver with little choice but to make a change.

Enter Fernando Bryant. Although Ford started against the Volunteers, Bryant saw significant playing time and provided one of the few bright spots in one of the Tide's most humiliating losses in school history. Ford recorded four tackles, including one for a loss of four yards. More importantly, he showed a remarkable understanding of the role of the cornerback in Oliver's secondary.

"Fernando had performed pretty well in practice, but I wasn't sure if he was ready to be a part of our rotation," said Oliver. "We kind of threw him into the fire in the

Tennessee game and he responded pretty well."

For all intents and purposes, the game was out of hand by the time Bryant saw action. Although raw, he showed flashes of brilliance, just what Oliver had been looking for.

The following week against Ole Miss, Bryant got his first career start and took his place among the select few that have started for the Tide as true freshmen.

He responded well, playing for most of the contest and recording seven tackles.

"It felt great to get my first start," said Bryant. "At the beginning of the year, I was told I'd have a chance to play, but I was also told that a redshirt season was a possibility. I think the Tennessee game woke us up. Everyone had kind of been walking around in a daze, waiting for things to happen rather than making

things happen. Coach Stallings laid down the law before the Ole Miss game. He basically said that if you don't perform, you're coming out for good. We decided as players that we would take charge and try to make things happen. I think it worked because we played with aggression and intensity. We went out and tried to make the play. Coach Stallings was pleased with our performance and I think we played pretty good as a unit from then on."

Although Bryant was pleased to be starting, it did not come without mixed emotions. He was now starting in place of his good friend Brad Ford, who was instrumental in Bryant's development and his decision to sign with Alabama.

"Yeah, it bothered me," said Bryant. "Brad and Deshea are my best friends on the team. When I got here, they both kind of took me under their wing and helped me out a lot. When I moved in front of Brad at corner, I was real happy to be

starting, but at the same time, I felt bad for Brad because he had helped me so much."

Bryant continued his solid play over the latter half of the season, gaining confidence each week. He was credited with seven tackles against Ole Miss and recorded a career-high eight stops against LSU, a game widely regarded as the team's best defensive performance of the year.

It was in Alabama's November 18 battle with Auburn that Bryant got his introduction, albeit an unpleasant one, to one of the nation's most heated rivalries.

"It was really intense," said Bryant. "That was the biggest, most vocal crowd I've ever played in front of. We had a chance to win the game but we just didn't get the job done defensively. I was real proud of our offense. They played great and I feel like we let them down. We all made some mistakes in that game and, hopefully, we'll learn from them and not let it happen again."

For the year, Bryant finished with 39 tackles, fifth-best on the team, and broke up three passes.

Bryant's exploits did not go unnoticed, as he was named to the *Knoxville News-Sentinel's* freshman All-SEC team.

"Fernando has an opportunity to accomplish some great things," said Oliver. "He's got a good head on his shoulders. He has a pretty good understanding of what we're asking him to do. Very few freshmen I've seen have shown his level of intelligence. When we finish spring practice, he ought to be pretty well established in our secondary."

As a prep senior at Riverdale, Bryant was one of the hot tickets in the state of Tennessee. Recruited by the likes of Notre Dame, Tennessee and Florida, Bryant had his choice of some of the nation's top programs. However, in the end, it was all Alabama.

"For a defensive back, as far as I'm concerned, Alabama is the only place to be," said Bryant. "I spent a lot of time talking to Deshea and he told me there's no better place to be. I've got so much respect for Coach Oliver and what he does. I remember watching the Sugar Bowl game against Miami. I don't know if I've ever seen a college secondary play like that. It was great. They played with such confidence and with great technique. I knew right

then I wanted to one day be a part of it."

Bryant's devotion and loyalty to Oliver is unwavering. "He's really meant a lot to me and to my development as an athlete," said Bryant. "He's as much of a teacher as he is a coach. If you listen to what he has to say, you're going to be a good football player. I've learned so much already. The more you learn, the more confidence you'll play with and playing with confidence is what it's all about."

Although Alabama's 1995 season was wrought with distractions and disappointment, Bryant feels the adversity will make his team stronger in 1996. Having been granted some unprecedented relief from the NCAA Infractions Appeals Committee, the cloud of uncertainty hanging over the Tide program has been lifted, allowing players and coaches to concentrate on restoring Alabama to its rightful place among college football's elite.

Bryant shares in the disappointment of his teammates that the Tide will not participate in post-season play for only the

second time since 1958. However, he now considers the bowl ban ancient history and looks forward to hitting the field in March for spring drills.

"We've got a chance to be outstanding next year," he said. "Our whole secondary will be back and once we all get on the same page, we'll be a force to be dealt with. We've got Freddie (quarterback Freddie Kitchens) and most of the offensive line coming back. I think we've got a legitimate shot at contending for the national championship."

Bryant, with three more years of eligibility, looks forward to a long and healthy relationship with his position coach. "With Coach Oliver's help, I think I'll continue to get better," said Bryant. "One of my goals is to win the Jim Thorpe Award and he thinks if I continue to work hard, I have a shot at it."

It will be interesting to watch Bryant mature in the Tide secondary. If Bill Oliver is right, and he usually is, Fernando Bryant could be a big part of Alabama's next great success story.

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The Point Is Not Scoring Points

by Kirk McNair

Senior wants to be a leader in his final season, a year in which he is moving inside

All his life, Anthony Brown has been a perimeter player, a big guard or a small forward. And Brown admits it was a little frustrating in his first three years at Alabama to be a perimeter player on a team in which the emphasis was inside. Now the 6-5, 220-pound Brown is a senior and there have been two substantial changes in his basketball life. One, Alabama is now more perimeter-oriented, the kind of up-tempo game that most suits the native of St. Petersburg, Florida. But in a good news-bad news twist, in his final season, Brown has been asked to move inside, to the power forward position.

The irony is not lost on Brown, but he sees the silver lining when many would see a cloud. "That's Anthony Brown," he said with a laugh. "We get into an up-tempo system, and I'm moved inside. But I love it. I like that we're pushing the ball, trying to take advantage of our team speed. I feel very comfortable in it."

And, he said, he's comfortable playing inside against men who are generally going to be several inches taller, frequently quite a bit heavier. "I'm not as big as most of the people I'm going against, but Coach (David) Hobbs felt he would be able to put me inside. He has confidence I can hold my own because of my strength."

And, Brown said, "I'm kind of happy that things aren't easy for me. I believe that if things just fall into your hands, you lose a little. If you have to overcome adversity, you become more mature."

The Tide senior said one thing in his final year that has been beneficial is the addition of former Bama star Mike Davis to the Alabama coaching staff. "He's been through it and understands everything the players are going through," Brown said. "That makes it a lot easier for us."

Brown has found that the most difficult aspect of his move to the inside has been post defense. "It's different from the perimeter," he said. "There's a lot more emphasis on footwork and, of course, it's more physical

inside. On the perimeter it's primarily speed and quickness. In both there are fundamentals, keeping yourself between the man and the ball and having confidence in your teammates to give help if you need it. And you have to be ready to give help, too. That's what team defense is all about."

While this is Brown's first experience playing in the paint, he said "It's good experience because I feel it adds another dimension to my game."

The move of Brown was not unexpected. When the Tide lost three inside players from last year's team (seniors Jason Caffey and Jamal Faulkner and sophomore Antonio McDyess), Hobbs said, "Anthony is a player who may have to slide into another position to fill our needs. He could play some down inside. He is strong enough to do that. Whether or not he's big enough to do it, I don't know."

Brown's game through most of his Alabama career has been almost nonexistent because of injuries. He has averaged missing 12 games per year in each of his first three seasons. He came on strong late in his freshman season in 1993, including scoring in double figures in three of the final four games of the regular season. He had 22 points against South Carolina, still his career best. Brown played in 22 games that year, averaging about 10 minutes per game and getting one start. For the year he averaged 4.9 points per game.

This is the third straight year Brown has opened the season in the starting lineup. As a sophomore he played in 21 games, getting starts in the first three games of the year after leading Bama in scoring in two exhibition games. However, he was slowed by ankle problems and the beginning of a nagging shoulder injury, and averaged only about nine minutes per game and only 3.6 points.

As a junior he opened strong, starting in Bama's first seven games before the old shoulder injury flared up. He had under

gone arthroscopic surgery on the shoulder, but midway through the 1995 season it was determined he had to have reconstructive surgery. "I've had torn cartilage, stretched ligaments and a torn rotator cuff in my right shoulder," Brown said. The injury, naturally, affected his shot. He didn't have a game in double figures before having to end his season after 12 games. Although he had never complained about the injury, by the time he had to call it a year he could barely get his arm above his head.

"It's just been tough breaks," Brown said. "But you can't feel sorry for yourself. You've just got to play. If you start to feel sorry for yourself you'll never advance. The only thing you can do is jump in and accept the challenge head on and play through whatever adversity you face."

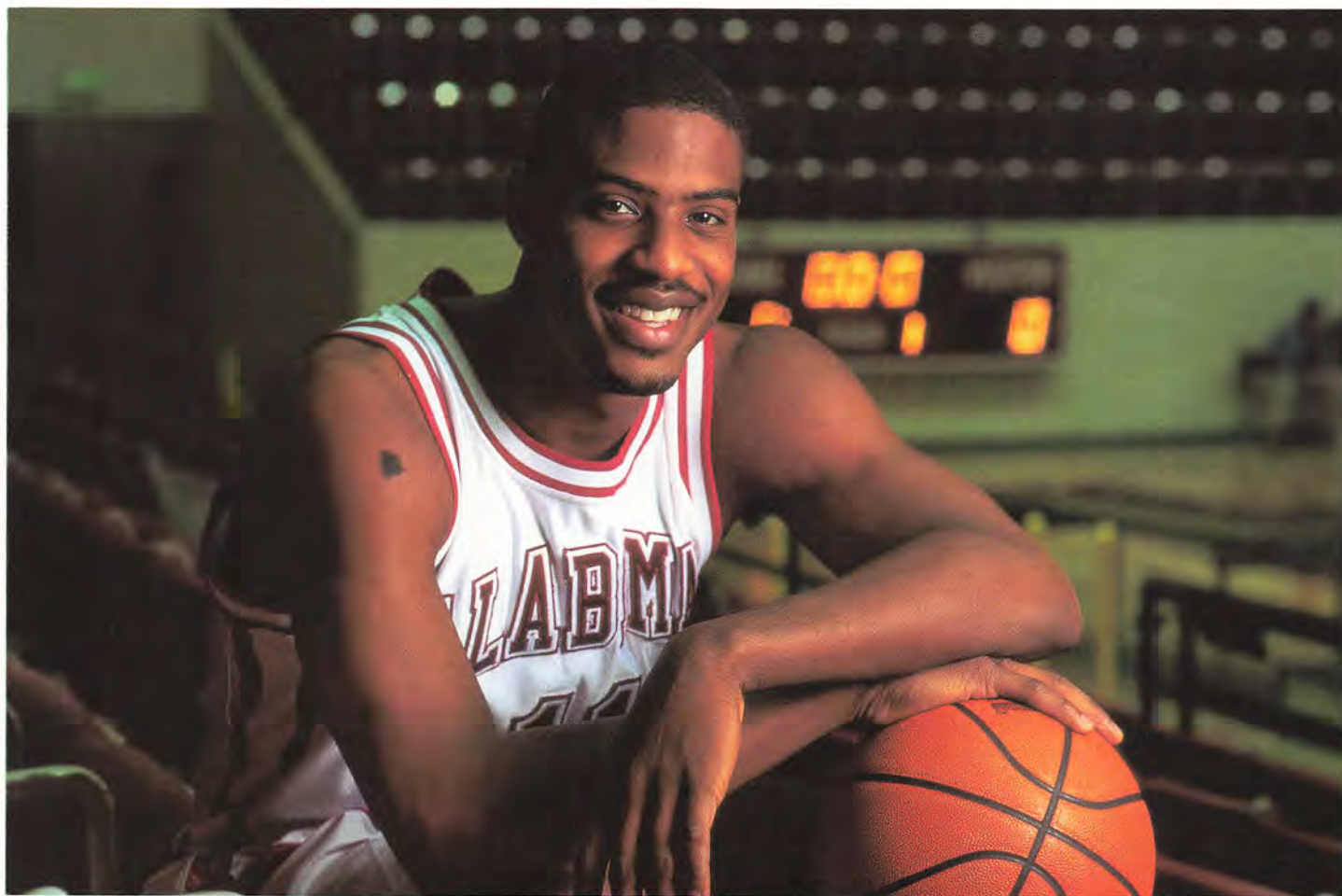
The first thing most people look for in analyzing a basketball game is the number of points scored by each player. Brown doesn't consider that critical to his game. However, he also doesn't believe that moving inside affects his scoring potential.

"I can score inside or outside if the opportunity is there," he said. "But I'm not out there looking for my shot. I want to be depended on for my defense and my rebounding."

As a senior, Brown sees himself in a far different role than in his previous three years. "Because of my injuries, it was hard for anyone to count on me the last three years," he said. "I know that. But now I want to be depended on as a leader. The best way to do that is with defense and rebounding, the hard work."

He said he doesn't have "any statistical goals or anything like that. I'm not trying to cram four years of playing into my last season. I'm just playing like I was playing at the park, trying to have fun."

Brown said he has always been a team player. "In high school, I could have averaged 40 points per game, but I averaged about 25," he said. "That's because there



Anthony Brown has had three injury-plagued seasons as an Alabama wing player. Now that he appears to be over his injuries, he is being asked to move into where the playing is toughest as a power forward. Although Brown will give up height inside, he and Head Coach David Hobbs believe Brown has the strength to hold his own. Barry Fikes Photo

were other players on the team and it's no fun to play when one person is getting all the shots." Brown scored in double figures in 30 of 31 games as a senior and averaged seven rebounds and five assists to go along with his 25 points. He led Coach Dan Wright's Lakewood High School team to a 29-2 record and a berth in the state championship tournament. He was a McDonald's All-America nominee, a *Street & Smith* honorable mention All-America and named as one of the nation's top 60 prep players by *The Sporting News*.

"Everyone's heard of being a leader by example," Brown said. "I think the younger guys on the team want the seniors to be leaders, but they are not going to follow a player who thinks only of himself. This is

my last year at Alabama, and I don't want to be remembered as a player who was selfish."

Brown said that there have been a number of leaders for him in his first three years, players who were hard workers. "There were a lot of players I like because we have always had hard workers," he said. "Latrell Sprewell probably stands out for me because when I came here he took me under his wing. He told me what to look for, what it was going to be like playing basketball at this level, and that the only way to succeed was to give it all you've got every day."

Brown said there is no pressure on him or the team this year because of the generally low expectations for Bama. But he also doesn't put much stock in what the pre-season predictions say. "Everyone judges us by

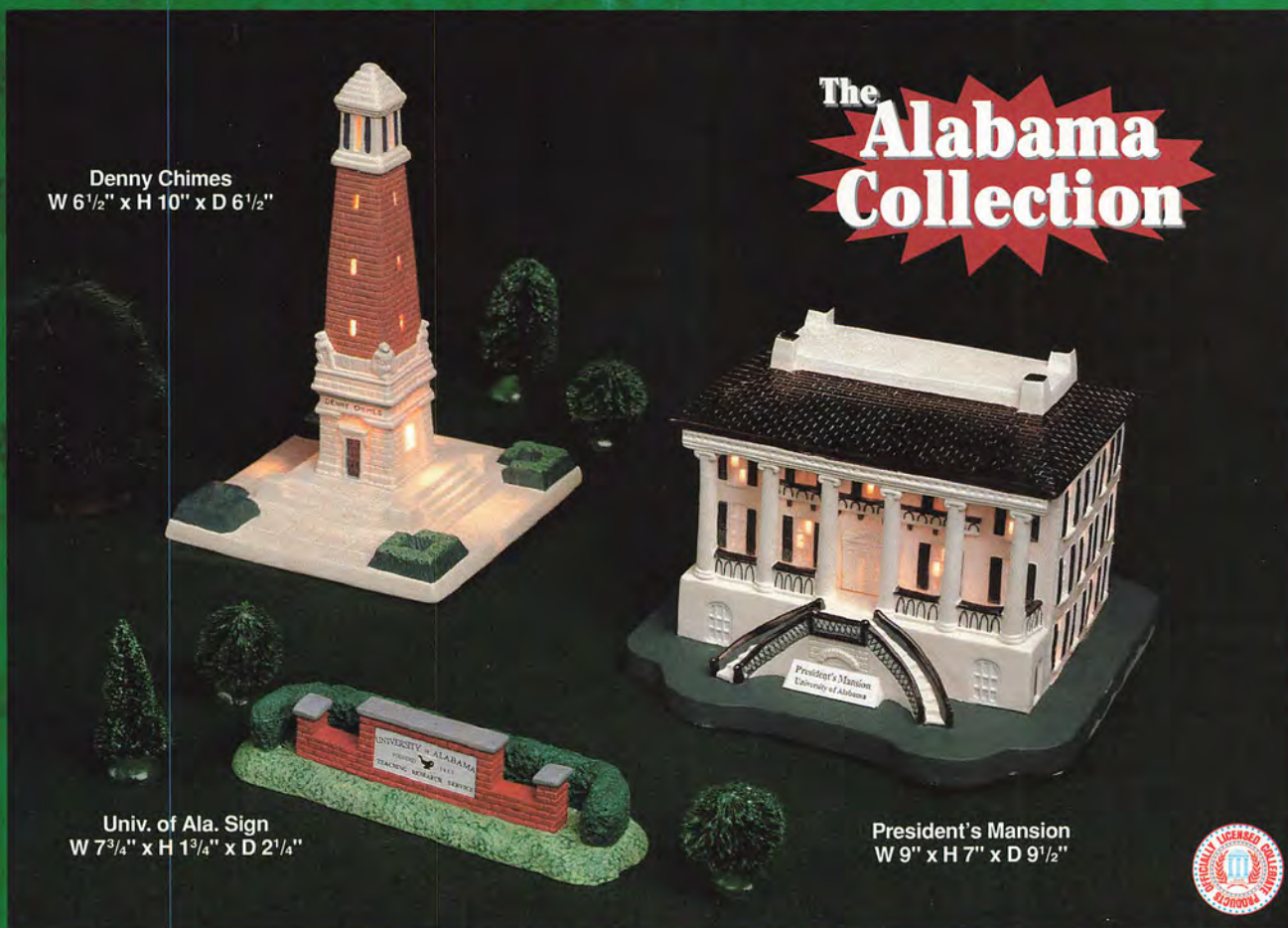
what we lost, not what we have," he said. "I think because they don't know what to expect, they don't expect much. I don't pay much attention to those predictions, and I think we'll surprise some people."

Brown doesn't know if this will be his last season as a basketball player. While no scouting reports are likely to project Brown as an NBA draft choice, he hopes that he does have an opportunity to continue playing after this season.

"I think if all my limbs hold together, I'll have a chance to play after this year," he said.

However, he's preparing for another career. He's on schedule to graduate next summer and would like to coach basketball.

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Southeast Provides Skilled Players

by Stephen Craig

Tide interested primarily in linemen, but outstanding skilled players get a look

Although Alabama is thought to be concentrating on linemen in its football recruiting this year, the Crimson Tide will join the rest of the nation in looking at the wealth of skill position high school players that populate the Southeast region.

On signing date, February 7, Alabama is expected to have its 12 signees (as mandated by NCAA sanctions) to come primarily from Alabama and the surrounding states of Mississippi, Florida, Georgia and Tennessee. Although Alabama was not believed to be active in recruiting in Louisiana, a handful of skill position players in Louisiana have been linked with Bama. The Tide is not involved with perhaps the region's most talked-about player, quarterback Tim Couch of Leslie County High School in Hyden, Kentucky. Couch holds most of the nation's records for prep passing. Couch is thought to be leaning to Kentucky over Tennessee with Notre Dame, Penn State, Ohio State, Auburn, Florida and Florida State also pursuing him.

There are a few other out-of-region skill position prospects who have been mentioned with Alabama.

Thomas Jones, 6-0, 189, is a running back from Powell Valley High School in Big Stone Gap, Virginia. He runs a 4.5 40-yard dash and holds numerous rushing records. He led his team to an unbeaten season as he rushed for 2,276 yards and 36 touchdowns. He is also considering Tennessee, Florida State and Notre Dame.

Lewis Sanders, 6-1, 185, is a defensive back at St. Peters in Staten Island, New York. He has a time of 10.4 in the 100 meters. He had 12 interceptions as a junior. A national recruiting service said, "Lewis is a big fan of the Crimson Tide and traveled to Tuscaloosa for the Tide's summer camp." He is academically qualified. Other schools in contention are Auburn, Maryland, Michigan State and Indiana.

Jason Granger is a member of the Detroit News Dream Team in Michigan. He is a 5-7, 165-pound wide receiver and defensive back at Farmington Hills Harrison and he

lists Michigan State and Alabama as his top two choices.

Here is a look at some of the top backs and wide receivers in the Southeast. These are not necessarily players being recruited by Alabama, and there is also a very good chance Crimson Tide recruiters have some prospects we are not aware of. However, these are players various publications, including recruiting specialty publications, have listed with Alabama. The prospects are listed alphabetically by states.

FLORIDA

Lavaraneus Coles is a 6-0, 185-pound running back from Ribault High School in Jacksonville. Probably the best size and speed combination in the state, Coles is considered a big time prospect by many big time programs. He has great balance and bursts to and through the hole, running tough inside the tackles. An All-North Florida and all-city selection, Coles ran for 1,600 yards as a sophomore and 1,550 as a

junior. Clocked at 4.5 in the 40. He is also a fine basketball player and a good student.

DeShawn English is a 6-1, 210-pound running back from Escambia High School in Pensacola. Hailing from the same high school that produced Emmitt Smith, English is considered to be the most powerful back at Escambia since Smith. As a junior, the All-Northwest Florida selection ran for 1,400 yards, and is clocked at 4.6 in the 40. He is not yet academically qualified.

Frankie Franklin is a 5-11, 185-pound running back from Sandalwood High School in Jacksonville. Franklin led the Jacksonville area in rushing through mid-October this season with 756 yards and 11 touchdowns, and as a junior he ran for more than 1,800 yards and 22 scores. A back who explodes through the hole, Franklin has great breakaway speed at 4.6 in the 40, but can also get the tough yards inside. He is only the 16th back in the state to rush for more than 5,000 yards in a ca-

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reer, and earned all-conference and second team all-state honors as a junior. He led his team to a number two ranking in class 6A with a 10-0 record last season. Florida, FSU, Miami, Auburn, Alabama and Georgia are all courting Franklin, who has not yet qualified academically.

Willie Gardner is a 6-1, 190-pound quarterback from Suwannee High School in Live Oak. Clocked at 4.5 in the 40, Gardner has a cannon for an arm and throws well on the run. With his scrambling ability and good decision making, he has been compared to former FSU great Charlie Ward. In nine games he tallied nearly 1,200 yards passing on 78 of 140 passes and five touchdowns, coupled with more than 1,600 yards and 13 touchdowns as a junior. Gardner is a four-year starter, three at quarterback. He is also his team's punter. He is not yet academically qualified.

Daryl Goring is a 5-10, 180-pound defensive back at Palm Beach Lakes High School in West Palm Beach. He runs a 4.55 40-yard dash. He is the son of a football coach (though not his coach) and is very close to qualifying academically. He is considered a good tackler and a good cover cornerback.

Robert Pollard is a 6-2, 205-pound running back and defensive back prospect from Orange Park. Pollard missed last season due to a lacerated arm, but was considered the state's top sophomore two seasons ago when he played at Jacksonville Bolles High School and made first team all-state. He is clocked at 4.5 in the 40. There are reports that Pollard wants to go out-of-state to college, although all the Florida schools are after him. He is not yet academically qualified.

David Thompson is a 6-0, 175-pound cornerback and wide receiver at Palm Beach Lakes High School, where he teams with Goring to make up one of the nation's finest high school defensive backfields. He earned second team all-state as a junior as he turned in four pass interceptions. One reason he is a top prospect is he is a top student with a 23 on the ACT.

T.T. Tolliver is a 5-11, 170-pound quarterback from Mainland High School in Daytona Beach. Considered the state's top athlete, Tolliver runs well and has the potential to play at wide receiver, quarterback, kick returner or defensive back. Clocked at 4.3 in the 40, Tolliver is very elusive. Through nine games this season he accounted for 1,405 yards and 11 touchdowns passing, and 504 yards and eight scored rushing. As a utility player last season he accounted for more than 2,000 yards of of-



Lee Jolly

fense and 20 scores, and earned all-state and all-area honors. Tolliver is also a top recruit in basketball. FSU, Florida, South Carolina and Clemson are said to be the leaders for Tolliver, who is not yet qualified.

Tres Walton is a 5-11, 170-pound running back and wide receiver prospect and a teammate of Tolliver's at Mainland. Clocked at a legitimate 4.36 in the 40, Walton has elusive moves and can be a game breaker. Even though he suffered a knee injury early in his senior season, he is still attracting a great deal of recruiting attention. As a junior he accounted for more than 1,200 yards of offense (852 rushing/9 touchdowns, 393 receiving/7 touchdowns.) This all-district and all-conference performer can play both sides of the ball, and is also a good student with a 3.3 grade point average. Florida, FSU, Clemson, Georgia, South Carolina, Auburn, Miami and Alabama are among his choices.

GEORGIA

Champ Bailey is a 5-11, 175-pound defensive back prospect from Charlton County High in Folkston. Bailey was the only junior to earn all-state honors last season in Class A, as he recorded four interceptions along with accounting for more than 1,300 yards of offense at quarterback last season. Clocked at 4.45 in the 40. His real name is Roland, but Champ has stuck with him. He is an excellent student.

Quincy Carter is a 6-3, 195-pound quarterback from Southwest Dekalb High in Decatur who is the leading candidate for Mr. Football in Georgia. Carter is another of the quarterbacks who has been compared to Charlie Ward, moving well and making

plays on the run. Last season he led his team to a 13-1 record, accounting for more than 2,300 yards of total offense (1,625/16 touchdowns passing, 709/14 touchdowns rushing. He is clocked at 4.6 in the 40. An excellent student, he made an early commitment to Georgia Tech. Carter is also an excellent baseball player who may be drafted.

Marcus Horton is a 6-2, 210-pound running back prospect from Harper-Archer High School in Atlanta. Horton is a great combination of size, speed and talent, who was clocked at 4.6 in the 40 on grass. Last season he led his team in rushing with 1,659 yards on 180 carries and scored 13 times. Horton benches 250-pounds, giving him the strength to break tackles inside or outside. Georgia, Alabama, Notre Dame and FSU are on his list. He should qualify academically.

Lee Jolly is a 6-2, 180-pound quarterback from Cedartown, the home of former Tide quarterback Brian Burgdorf. His veteran coach says he is the most complete quarterback he's ever seen, quick on the option with good arm strength. Jolly is a three-year starter who has totalled more than 3,000 total yards of offense in his career. As a junior he rushed and passed for over 1,000 yards, accounted for 30 touchdowns, and suffered only five interceptions. He may also play baseball in college. Jolly is also a stellar student with a 3.9 grade point average.

Patrick Pass is a 6-0, 205-pound running back from Tucker. A three-year starter, Pass rushed for 1,882 yards on 251 carries, with 20 touchdowns as a junior. He led his team to a 13-1 record last season, and is also on the state championship 4x100 meter relay team in track. Pass is considered by many to be the nation's top running back prospect, and is certainly the best in the state. He is also a fine defensive back, but Pass is being recruited for offense. Georgia, Alabama, Notre Dame and FSU are courting Pass, who was considered a cinch for Georgia before Ray Goff was fired. He is a good student.

Cory Robinson is a 5-11, 175-pound teammate of Pass at Tucker. Robinson may be the best defensive back in the state, but has been overshadowed for recognition by Pass. A skilled athlete, Robinson runs a 4.45 in the 40 and has great body control. Robinson also plays wide receiver. He is also a good student with a 3.7 grade point average. He, too, originally planned to sign with Georgia before the firing of Goff.

Troy Tolbert is a 6-2, 190-pound defensive back at Josey High School in Augusta. He has been clocked at 4.4 in the 40. Although

Tolbert is considered a defensive back prospect, he is also a good wide receiver. As a junior he had six interceptions and 90 tackles. He also plays basketball, soccer, tennis and runs track. In addition to his athletic ability, his work in the classroom (3.8 grade point average) and a younger brother who is an excellent football player add to his attractiveness.

David Walker is a 6-2, 178-pound defensive back prospect from Cross Keys High School in Atlanta. A versatile athlete who has great hands and speed, Walker is clocked at 4.4 in the 40 and is projected to play defensive back in college. Benching 325, Walker is strong and can play on both sides of the ball, as he rushed for more than 400 yards and has pass receptions of almost 200 yards last season. Two things work against Walker as a prospect: he is not yet academically qualified and he left his team in mid-season for an unspecified reason.

LOUISIANA

Dominic Brown is a 5-10, 165-pound defensive back and kick return specialist from Boutte High School in Hahnville. He runs a 4.4 40 and used that speed to return a kick-off 93 yards and help his team to the 1994

5A state championship. LSU, FSU, Alabama, Arkansas and Texas A&M are among the schools linked with Brown.

Keith Porter is a 5-11, 195-pound defensive back at Salmen High School in Slidell. He has a 4.5 clocking in the 40. He is considered a very good tackler. Porter also plays running back and returns kicks and led his team to the 1994 4A state title. He is an excellent student who has drawn the attention of Notre Dame, Southern Cal, Alabama, Tennessee and FSU, as well as LSU.

Sy Price is a 6-0, 160-pound defensive back at Eunice. He was a quarterback as a junior, but is considered the best defensive back prospect in the state. He runs a 4.4 40. Alabama, LSU, Texas A&M, Nebraska, Arkansas and Florida State are on his list.

MISSISSIPPI

Darryl Carter is a 6-2, 204-pound quarterback/defensive back prospect from Laurel. Clocking at 4.52 in the 40, Carter's speed and athleticism make him always a threat for the big play. As a scrambler he is very elusive, showing enough versatility to play quarterback, running back, wide receiver and defensive back. Along with football

Carter is being recruited in basketball, as he was the top player on the class 4A state championship team as a sophomore. Carter is tops in this state's class of quarterbacks, as he passed for 882 yards and 14 touchdowns and rushed for more than 400 yards and four scores.

Anthony Griffin is a 5-10, 170-pound running back from Gulfport. A two-sport athlete as well, Griffin has great speed at between 4.4 and 4.5 in the 40. A good straight on runner, Griffin will surprise defenders with good moves. He is a strong and tough runner who accounted for 1,100 yards last season. On the track team he is the class 5A 110- and 300-meter hurdle champion, and he does well in the classroom with a 3.5 grade point average. FSU, Mississippi State, Notre Dame, Auburn, Alabama and LSU are said to be interested.

Joe Gunn is a 5-10, 187-pound running back from Amory. A three-year starter, Gunn is a tremendous three-sport athlete. Clocking at 4.5 in the 40, Gunn has great speed and surprising power for his size. His speed makes him elusive, but he can also break tackles. In '94 he accounted for nearly 1,500 yards on 164 carries and 25 touch-

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downs for the 15-0 class 3A state champions. In this year's state championship game he ran for a record 281 yards, giving him a state record of 2,602. He also plays baseball and runs track. Ole Miss, Mississippi State, LSU, Florida, Auburn, Tennessee and Alabama are in the running.

Jay Johnson is a 6-1, 180-pound wide receiver from Starkville. Johnson is a smooth and polished receiver who has great speed and hands. The book on Johnson is he runs very precise routes and is very dangerous after the catch with 4.5 speed. He is also an accomplished defensive back, a sure tackler. His ability helped lead his team to the class 4A state championship last season. He is also a fine basketball player and track man.

Jamie Jones is a 6-4, 180-pound wide receiver/defensive back prospect from Laurel. A teammate of Carter, Jones has great speed (4.53 in the 40), hands, and is a tremendous athlete. Projected as a free safety in college, Jones is an aggressive competitor who hits hard on defense. The catch phrase "breaks well on the ball" is commonly used with Jones, as he has recorded 12 interception in two years along with 42 tackles and eight picks last season. Jones does not miss tackles. He will also draw recruiting attention in basketball.

Reggie Morris is a 6-1, 235-pound fullback from South Panola High in Batesville. A powerful runner, Morris has 4.6 speed and is very strong, benching 330 and squatting 430. Morris is big and strong and hasn't reached his potential yet. A three-year starter, Morris ran for more than 1,600 yards as a junior, and almost always breaks the first tackle. He also plays defensive end and linebacker. He is also a second baseman on the baseball team and plays basketball and runs track. He has a 3.1 grade point average. Mississippi State, Alabama, Tennessee, FSU and Arkansas have been linked with Morris.

Kelby Nance is a 6-0, 209-pound running back from Hattiesburg. Nance is a great combination of power and speed, clocked at 4.6 in the 40. Last season he ran for more than 1,400 yards and scored 22 touchdowns. He is originally from Charleston, South Carolina, and Clemson is among the schools involved with him. He is also considering LSU, Mississippi State and Alabama.

Robert Tyler, Jr., is a 5-11, 225-pound fullback and linebacker at Cleveland. Among the schools involved with him are Alabama, Mississippi State, Ole Miss, LSU and Tennessee, some looking at him as a linebacker, some as a fullback. He runs a 4.6 40.



Reggie Morris

TENNESSEE

Mikki Allen is a 5-11, 174-pound wide receiver and defensive back at Brentwood Academy. Allen is a nephew of former Alabama star defensive back Kermit Kendrick, who is currently Alabama's compliance officer.

Cullen Bryant, Jr. is a 6-4, 238-pound running back from Houston High in Germantown. The son of former Los Angeles Rams great Cullen Bryant, Junior runs the same way. He is incredibly durable and he accounted for nearly 1,500 yards and 25 touchdowns in ten games as a tailback last season. As a junior he earned all-metro and honorable mention all-state honors, and he could be the South's best fullback prospect. On the minus side, a number of colleges are no longer looking at Bryant because he quit his team over a dispute with his coach on how he was being utilized, the coach wanting to move him to his more natural position, fullback. He gained over 400 yards in four games before quitting. He could also be a linebacker or defensive end.

Damien Dodson is a 5-9, 170-pound wide receiver from Westwood High in Memphis. As a junior Dodson earned all-region, all-metro and all-state honors, totalling more than 1,700 yards receiving on 96 catches while being double and triple teamed. He had six receptions for 236 yards and three touchdowns in his final regular season game. Clocking at 4.4 in the 40, Dodson is extremely dangerous after the catch. He is also a track star and an excellent student with a 3.6 grade point average.

Kenton Evans is a 6-3, 185-pound quarter-

back prospect and teammate of Dodson's at Westwood. Also all-region, all-metro and all-state as a junior, Evans is fourth in all-time high school passing yardage. As a sophomore he completed 224 of 430 passes for 3,275 yards and 33 touchdowns with 21 interceptions. Between his sophomore and junior years he improved the turnover ratio as a junior he recorded 231 completions of 415 attempts for 3,828 yards, 38 touchdowns and only 10 picks. As a senior he hit 156 of 285 for 2,655 yards and 37 touchdowns with only eight interceptions. For his four-year career he completed 641 of 1,139 passes for 10,489 yards with 112 touchdowns and 44 interceptions. He is clocked at 4.7 in the 40.

Gerald Griffin is a 6-2, 170-pound defensive back and wide receiver from Riverdale High in Murfreesboro. He is clocked at 4.4 in the 40. Projected to play free safety in college, Griffin has big play ability. He returned three of his eight interceptions as a junior for touchdowns, along with totalling 540 yards and seven touchdowns as a receiver on offense. Griffin teamed with current Tide defensive back Fernando Bryant, who is his cousin. He is the son of former NFLer James and is the nephew of current Cleveland Browns defensive back Don Griffin. As a senior he missed three games with an injury and his team lost two of them, the only losses in an 8-2 regular season. As a senior he had seven interceptions (one returned for a touchdown) and returned a fumble recovery for a score. He also had 62 tackles and broke up four passes. On offense he had 32 carries for 317 yards (9.9 per attempt), 25 receptions for 503 yards (20.1 per catch), 237 yards on seven kickoff returns (33.9 average) and 138 yards on 12 punt returns (11.5 average). He is considered the number one prospect in Tennessee this year. Alabama and Tennessee are considered the two schools in contention for Griffin.

Teofilo Riley is a 6-2, 195-pound running back and defensive back from Central High in Memphis. Projected to play free safety, Riley was all-region, all-metro, all-city and honorable mention all-state last season. He intercepted three passes last season and totalled 176 return yards, along with rushing for 1,500 yards and 36 touchdowns in his first two seasons. As a senior he missed some playing time with injuries but still had 813 rushing yards and 10 touchdowns. Riley is clocked at 4.5 in the 40.

Ron Strickland is a 6-1, 195-pound wide receiver and defensive back from Tyner High School in Chattanooga. Considered the top player in the city, Strickland was all-region, all-

city and all-state last season with 36 receptions, 984 yards and 11 touchdowns receiving. As a senior he had 33 catches for 554 yards and five touchdowns. Clocked at 4.4 in the 40, Strickland has good moves and blows by defenders. He is strong, benching 325 and also recorded 51 tackles and four interceptions on defense. He also plays basketball and runs track. He was in Tennessee's football camp last year.

Eric Westmoreland is a 6-0, 195-pound

running back prospect from Marion County High in Jasper. All-state as a junior, Westmoreland was the runner-up as Mr. Football. In '94 he tallied 1,500 yards and 20 touchdowns, playing in the Clinic Bowl for the state championship team. In that game he scored four touchdowns and ran for 154 yards. As a senior he was named Mr. Football for Class 3A as he led his team to an undefeated regular season as he picked up 2,357

yards and scored 37 touchdowns. His team won four state championships and had an 80-5 record in his career. He is a versatile player who has played halfback, fullback, free safety, strong safety, cornerback and linebacker. On defense he also played well, recording seven interception and as a senior he led the team in tackles. Tennessee and Alabama are the leaders for his signature with Notre Dame also involved.

Tide Has Two (Or Three) Committed

Alabama football has two or three high school football prospects who have committed to join the Crimson Tide when signings begin February 7. The question is whether the first player who announced for Bama is still committed. Although verbal commitments are non-binding, they almost always hold up. However, there is a question as to whether defensive end Kenny Smith of North Jackson High School in Stevenson is still committed to Alabama.

Meanwhile, two out-of-state offensive linemen have committed to Alabama. Adam Joiner, a tight end who could also possibly be a center, from Milton, Florida, and Paul Hogan, a center at Valdosta, Georgia, have said they will sign with Alabama.

Joiner, 6-4, 265, committed in late November. "Alabama is the place that impressed me most," he said. "It's impressed me as I've been growing up. It had everything I wanted: a great football program and the academics I wanted. I want to be a coach,

and some of the greatest coaches in football have come from Alabama."

Joiner led Milton to a 10-0 regular season record, then suffered a broken foot in the first round of the playoffs. He should be fully recovered by the first of the year.

Joiner played tight end at Milton and expects that to be the first place Bama coaches look at him. But he also said he thought there was a chance he would work at center. "It really doesn't matter to me where I play as long as I play," he said.

He turned down offers of official recruiting trips to Auburn, Clemson, Notre Dame, Florida, Florida State and Georgia after committing to Alabama.

Alabama will not continue to recruit a player who has committed unless that player invites the attention. However, there are reports that Joiner is still being recruited by Florida and Notre Dame.

Hogan, 6-3, 245, said that he expects to be redshirted as a freshman at Alabama and hopes to increase his weight to about 270. Hogan was a defensive player until his senior season, when famed Valdosta High School moved him to center. His team went 11-2 and made it to the state playoffs. He had made unofficial visits to Georgia and South Carolina (where his brother, Ben, was 1991 special teams captain), as well as to Alabama, last season.

Hogan did not grow up an Alabama fan, but was attracted by the tradition of the Crimson Tide. "I was real impressed with those coaches," he said. He said he was also impressed with Alabama's scholastic program. He plans to be an engineer.

Hogan and Joiner are academically eligible.

There are a number of questions concerning Smith's commitment, which came in October. There is no question that he continued to receive recruiting attention from other schools, notably Tennessee. A Tennessee publication recently noted that Tom Lemming, the Chicago-based recruiting scout, said of Smith: "He lives near Chattanooga, but plays in Stevenson,

Alabama. I thought he was one of the top 25 players in the country. He's about 6-5, 225 (actually, Smith is 6-7, 265), a tight end/defensive end. He would be the top player in Tennessee if he'd played ball here, but he went across the state line into Alabama. He committed to Alabama, but now he says he's open and Tennessee is back in the race. So is Notre Dame and Auburn."

In December, Smith's father said that his son was going to visit Penn State, Tennessee, Nebraska and either Texas A&M or Auburn.

It is not likely Notre Dame will be involved with Smith because of academics. Indeed, it is Smith's academic situation more than anything else that is of concern to Alabama's recruiting staff. Smith originally went to high school in Tennessee and there is some question about the transfer of some of his credits. Additionally, he has been a marginal student. Finally, his passing ACT score of 19 was tossed out because it was too much of an improvement on his first score.

—Kirk McNair



Adam Joiner



Paul Hogan

BAMA SCORECARD

Low Returns

It's no secret that Alabama Head Men's Basketball Coach David Hobbs had some rebuilding to do this year. With four starters lost from 1995, Bama returned only 33.5 per cent of its scoring from last year. But that was only 11th lowest in the SEC. Arkansas has just 13.1 per cent of its scoring back from last season.

Three-Point Record

When Alabama defeated Mercer, 100-73, on December 16, the Crimson Tide set a school record for three-point shots, hitting 16. Eric Washington led the way with seven of 10 as he scored 27 points in only 18 minutes of play. Back-up freshman guard Anton Reese hit four-of-four three-pointers, walk-on Blake Thraser had two and Brian Williams, Marvin Orange and Damon Bacote had one each.

Three-Point Attack

Tide Head Basketball Coach David Hobbs has joined the fight against cancer. The National Association of Basketball Coaches is asking basketball fans to pledge a donation in the Coaches vs. Cancer campaign. For every three-point shot the team makes (Bama made 207 in 1994-95), the Tuscaloosa America Cancer Society would like you to pledge. Call (205) 758-0700.

Surgery For Prospect

Lester Earl, considered by many to be the nation's top high school senior basketball prospect, was knocked out of action in late November by arthroscopic knee surgery. The 6-10 center at Baton Rouge (Louisiana) Glen Oaks High School is being recruited by Alabama, among many other schools.

Earl did not sign in the early period. However, he made an unofficial visit to Alabama. LSU, Tulane, UNLV, Kansas and UCLA are listed as the schools making Earl's final list. Kentucky was recently eliminated. A national recruiting expert, Bob Gibbons, was recently quoted as saying that Earl will sign with LSU.

Earl was expected to return to action no later than early January.

The late signing period for basketball begins April 10.

Staying Out

Alabama Head Women's Basketball Coach Rick Moody was dealt a severe blow when pre-season All-SEC center Yolanda Watkins was lost for the year with a knee injury last summer. Watkins was in excellent physical condition when she suffered the injury and under went reconstructive surgery in August. Because of her condition and her work ethic, rehabilitation has gone much

faster than expected, so much so that Watkins seriously considered rejoining her teammates on the court following the Christmas break, foregoing the planned red-shirt season.

However, Watkins has reconsidered, and now will sit out the season.

Watkins also has a condition in a jaw joint that requires surgery, which she will have in early January.

Top Replacement

Although the loss of center Yolanda Watkins to the women's basketball team can't be minimized, the emergence of junior college transfer Shalonda Enis has taken a lot of the sting out.

The 1995 junior college national player of the year ranked second in the SEC in both scoring in rebounding in mid-December and had been named to the all-tournament teams of all three tournaments in which the Tide had played. She had been named the most valuable player in two of those tournaments, Bama's own Capstone Classic and the Lady Raider Classic hosted by Middle Tennessee State. The one tournament in which she was not MVP was the Richmond Classic, where the field included 1994 national champion North Carolina and 1995 national champion Connecticut.

She had a 35-point performance in just 26 minutes in a game against East Tennessee State and 30 points in 27 minutes against Jackson State.

Welcome Back

Former Alabama women's basketball players are invited to return to Tuscaloosa February 3 for a reunion. The Bama women will be playing LSU at 7 p.m. in Coleman Coliseum and all former players on hand will be recognized. Former players should call Nancy Kelly at (205) 348-7077 for details.

Baseball Practice Begins

Alabama Head Baseball Coach Jim Wells will put his team on the practice field January 8, which is the first day of spring semester.

Bama opens play in the Olive Garden Classic in Kissimmee, Florida, February 9 against Wake Forest. Bama will also play Georgia Tech and North Carolina in the tournament. The Tide's first home game is February 16 against Centenary.

Season tickets are now on sale from The University of Alabama, Athletics Ticket Office, P.O. Box 870394, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487. Season tickets are \$60 for upper level and \$75 for lower level for Alabama's 29 home games. There are also family and senior citizen plans. For more information call the ticket office at (205) 348-6111.

Grand Slammers Meet

The first 1996 meeting of the Grand Slammers, the support group for Alabama baseball, will be at 7 p.m. January 8 in the President's Lounge in Coleman Coliseum. The group this year is adding a family membership with up to four members of a family joining for \$40. An individual membership is \$25. For further information contact Scott Cork, president of the group, in Tuscaloosa at (205) 333-9943.

Fast Start

Alabama's swimming and diving teams are off to fast starts this season. Second-year Head Coach Chuck Horton has brought in a talented group of freshmen which have made an immediate impact.

In just a handful of meets, rookies Jenny Dudley of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Rania Elwani of Egypt have already broken school records. Dudley dropped the 200-yard backstroke record by nearly a second, while Elwani shaved a quarter of a second off the 100-yard freestyle mark.

Senior Stacy Potter of Americus, Georgia, and sophomore Karen Jones of Birmingham are reinforcing their reputations as one of the best one-two punches in the conference when it comes to the 100-yard butterfly. The duo raced to a first-second finish at the Carolina Invitational.

Birmingham native Adam McBride, a junior, has already posted the best regular season time of his career in the 200-yard breaststroke. McBride has gone a long way towards shoring up what was a weak point for the Tide last season.

Additional Swim Signee

The Alabama men's swimming team added a signee in the early signing period. Carter Hall, a 6-3, 185-pound butterfly specialist from Charlotte, North Carolina, inked with the Tide.

A prep All-America, Hall was named Mecklenburg Swimmer of the Year in 1995. The 1994 and 1995 state champion in the 100 butterfly, Hall powered Providence High School to the 1994 state championship. He has competed at both the Junior and Senior national championships. Hall is an honor student.

First Alternate

Tide freshman distance runner Tim Broe may be spending part of next March at the World Cross Country Championship in Capetown, South Africa, by virtue of his finish in the junior division of the Reebok/USA National Cross Country Championship in Boston. The field included the nation's top 122 runners under the age of 20. Broe ran the eight kilometer course in 24:41, 16 sec-

onds out of first place, and was eighth. He is the first alternate for the United States team that will compete at the World Championship and will move up to the traveling team if one of the first six finishers cannot compete.

Bama freshman John Williamson finished 55th with a time of 26:12.

In the women's senior race, Tide sophomore Jessica Fry placed 18th in a field of 196. At age 19, she was the youngest woman in the race. Her time of 20:35 in the six kilometer run was 30 seconds out of the top ten. The women's national team will be determined by later competition.

Tide Head Cross Country Coach David Troy said, "Jessica gave a very outstanding effort. She was the only runner under 20 and was going against the best distance runners in the country."

All-Region

Junior goalkeeper Amy Pseja was named to the National Soccer Coaches' Association's Central Region second team. She was the only Tide women's soccer player to receive national recognition. Pseja missed four starts in the Tide's final five regular season games due to injury, but finished the season with a 1.55 goals against average. She led the Tide (11-9 overall and 7-3 in SEC play) to its first ever SEC Western Division championship and into the championship game of the SEC Women's Soccer Tournament. Pseja holds the Alabama career record for saves in a season with 108.

Excite Night

The Alabama gymnastics team will host its annual "Meet the Team" exhibition meet at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, January 6. The exhibition is called "Excite Night."

Bama's first meet of the year will be at Auburn at 8 p.m. January 13. The Tide's first home meet will be in Coleman Coliseum at 7:30 p.m. Friday, January 19, when Alabama hosts Penn State and Nebraska.

For season tickets, tickets to any meet or NCAA Championship Meet ticket packages call The University's Athletics Ticket Office at (205) 348-6111.

Tennis Rankings

In the latest Rolex/Intercollegiate Tennis Association rankings, the Alabama women's team retained its top-25 ranking while the men's team took another step in its rebuilding project.

The women's team of Coach Jim Tressler retained its pre-season ranking of 21st,

while the men's team of Coach Joey Rive earned votes, finishing just out of the top 25. Both teams are a blend of gifted newcomers and talented veterans.

Baili Camino, a freshman on the women's team, earned her first individual ranking at number 91. She played seven ranked opp

nents in the fall and defeated three of them. Her overall fall record was 11-4. She took victories over ranked players at LSU and Vanderbilt.

"I'm very pleased with both our team ranking and the fact that Baili earned a spot in the rankings," Tressler said. "I don't know that we were a top 25 team at the beginning of the fall, but I think we were one by the end. Baili has worked extremely hard this fall and had some very good wins. She also had some very good matches against some of the nation's best that she didn't quite pull out. Even when she didn't win, she was competitive. Overall, I'm very excited about the spring."

Alabama's women open up the 1996 season Saturday, February 10, against Georgia Tech at home. The Tide men open up January 20 at home with a doubleheader against Troy State and Georgia State.

Rehling Honored

Former Alabama Head Men's Golf Coach Conrad Rehling, who has won virtually every honor in his profession, will be featured in January's issue of *Golf* magazine as one of the "100 Best Teachers in America."

Eli Number One

For many years Stan Torgerson was the radio play-by-play broadcaster for Ole Miss. For the past decade or so, Torgerson has written a column on the SEC. Recently he wrote: "In my book, Eli Gold of the Alabama Radio Network has become the best play-by-play announcer in the Southeastern Conference."

Burdette Dies

Floyd Burdette earned most of his honors as the long-time head basketball coach at Tennessee Martin, but Burdette got his first coaching job at Alabama. Burdette died December 1 in Martin at the age of 81.

Burdette was an all-conference player at Murray State in Kentucky in 1937 and 1938, then went to Oklahoma State where he played for the legendary Henry Iba. In 1946-47 he became head basketball coach at Alabama and coached the team to an 83-57 record in six years. He returned to his hometown of Martin, Tennessee, prior to the 1952-53 season and coached for 19 years. He is a member of the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame.

This Is January

This is the January, 1996, issue of 'BAMA. Because of the holiday schedules affecting work and mail delivery, this issue was published a week earlier than normal and mailed before Christmas if everything went according to plan.

There is always a little extra gap between the publication of the January and February issues. The February issue will be mailed on January 31.

What Do You Do?

The mail brings interesting items to 'BAMA. On the same day we received two letters addressing the same subject, future Alabama football schedules. In our newsletter following the North Texas game, we opined that Alabama's recent schedule of non-conference games was an embarrassment, and hoped that in the future the schedule might be improved to a level appropriate to Alabama's rich tradition.

One of our readers chastised us as self-appointed athletics director and said our opinions were in bad taste. "You write and let the athletics director set the schedule," he said.

However, the next letter agreed with us, calling the announced future football schedule "pathetic." And he had a suggestion similar to one we (and others) have proposed.

He suggested that Alabama's ticket revenue remain constant whether Alabama has six home games or seven. That would mean the price of a ticket would be \$22 during a seven-game home schedule, about \$26 when there were only six home games. In return, he suggested The University freeze the season ticket price every four years.

"I feel this is a win-win situation," he wrote. "The school secures its football revenue and the fans get to see the Tide play the likes of Michigan and Notre Dame instead of Bowling Green and The Sisters of the Poor."

And Another Letter

The publishers of sports specialty publications (such as 'BAMA) all send their works to one another so that we get to check out some 39 other schools.

Recently there was a letter published in *Buckeye Sports Bulletin*, which covers Ohio State. A reader said he had been diagnosed by his wife as having AAS. She had returned home on a Saturday afternoon and found her husband morose. She assumed Ohio State had lost to Indiana. In fact, Ohio State had won, 42-3, but the husband/fan had wanted a more lopsided score. Thus the diagnosis of AAS.

She explained that AAS is "Acute Alabama Syndrome." The writer said that Alabama had gone 11-1 in 1989 (actually it was 10-2) and that Tide fans had then run Bill Curry out of town (never mind that Bill Curry had a contract, which he broke to go to Kentucky). The writer continued that after Alabama won the national championship in 1992 that Tide fans complained because Bama hadn't beaten Vanderbilt and Southern Miss by more convincing scores. (Excuse us, but in all the celebration of the national championship, we don't remember any Alabama fans lamenting close calls during that wonderful season.)

In fairness, the letter writer was from Marietta, Georgia, and probably gets his information about what's going on at Alabama from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

1995-96 Alabama Winter Sports Schedules

Men's Basketball

Date	Opponent	Time
93	Marathon Oil (Exh.)	74
89	Croatia (Exh.)	85
84	Winthrop	69
74	@ North Texas	72
90	Tennessee Tech	78
100	Mercer	73
Dec. 19	Florida A&M	7:30
Dec. 21	Tulane	7:30
Cessna Classic at Wichita, Kansas		
Dec. 28	St. Peters	TBA
Dec. 29	Bucknell or Wichita State	TBA
Jan. 3	Vanderbilt	7:30
Jan. 6	@ LSU (SS)	7:00
Jan. 10	Auburn	7:30
Jan. 13	@ Mississippi State (CBS)	3:00
Jan. 17	Tennessee	7:30
Jan. 20	@ South Carolina	6:30
Jan. 23	Arkansas (ESPN)	8:30
Jan. 27	@ Ole Miss	7:00
Jan. 31	Florida	7:30
Feb. 4	@ Syracuse (CBS)	12:00
Feb. 6	@ Southern Miss	7:30
Feb. 10	@ Georgia (JP)	1:00
Feb. 14	@ Auburn	7:30
Feb. 17	LSU (JP)	2:00
Feb. 20	@ Kentucky (ESPN)	8:30
Feb. 24	Mississippi State (JP)	2:00
Feb. 28	@ Arkansas (JP)	7:00
March 2	Ole Miss	7:30
March 7-	SEC Tournament	
March 10	@ New Orleans	

Times are central
JP-Jefferson Pilot

SS-SportsSouth

Men's Swimming & Diving

Date/	Opponent	Time/
UA		Opp.
118	Kentucky	120
136	LSU	107
Nov. 11	Florida	cancelled
Nov. 17-19	Nebraska Invitational @ Lincoln	
Dec. 1-3	Nike Cup @ Chapel Hill, N.C.	
Jan. 8	NC State & Florida State	2:00
Jan. 13	NE Louisiana	11:00
Jan. 27	@ Auburn	TBA
Feb. 7-10	SEC Championships @ Knoxville	
Feb. 23-25	Georgia Invitational @ Athens	
March 3-8	US Swimming Olympic Trials @ Indianapolis	
March 14-	NCAA Zone Diving	
March 16	@ TBA	
March 28-	NCAA Championships	
March 30	@ Austin, Texas	

Times are central

Women's Basketball

Date	Opponent	Time
94	Australia (Exh.)	36
84	Athletes In Action (Exh.)	80
Sheraton Capstone Inn Classic		
87	Central Florida	58
79	Maine	43
95	East Tennessee State	64
Central Fidelity Invitational @ Richmond, Va.		
85	@ Richmond	57
67	Connecticut	81
Garden Plaza Classic @ Murfreesboro, Tenn.		
92	Jackson State	62
68	Middle Tennessee State	53
Dec. 17	Georgia (SS)	6:00
Dec. 18	Bethune-Cookman	7:00
Howard Bank Classic @ Burlington, Ver.		
Dec. 21	UNC-Greensboro	5:00
Dec. 22	Vermont or San Diego	TBA
Junkanoo Shootout @ Nassau, Bahamas		
Dec. 28	Oklahoma	6:00
Dec. 29	Western Kentucky or Virginia Commonwealth	TBA
Jan. 4	@ Arkansas	7:00
Jan. 7	@ Ole Miss (SS)	2:30
Jan. 13	Mississippi State	7:00
Jan. 16	@ Northwestern State	7:00
Jan. 20	Kentucky	7:00
Jan. 24	Auburn	7:00
Jan. 27	@ Tennessee (SS)	1:00
Jan. 31	Alabama State	5:00
Feb. 3	LSU	7:00
Feb. 13	@ Auburn	7:00
Feb. 17	Florida	7:00
Feb. 19	@ Vanderbilt (ESPN)	12:30
Feb. 22	@ South Carolina	6:00
March 1-	SEC Tournament	
March 4	@ Chattanooga	

Times are central
SS-SportsSouth

Women's Swimming & Diving

Date/	Opponent	Time/
UA		Opp.
114	Kentucky	129
153	LSU	89
Nov. 11	Florida	cancelled
Nov. 17-19	Nebraska Invitational @ Lincoln	
Dec. 1-3	Nike Cup @ Chapel Hill, N.C.	
Jan. 8	NC State & Florida State	2:00
Jan. 27	@ Auburn	TBA
Jan. 27	Michigan @ Auburn	TBA
Feb. 7-10	SEC Championships @ Knoxville	
Feb. 23-25	Georgia Invitational @ Athens	
March 3-8	US Swimming Olympic Trials @ Indianapolis	
March 14-	NCAA Zone Diving	
March 16	@ TBA	
March 21-	NCAA Championships	
March 23	@ Ann Arbor, Michigan	

Times are central

Gymnastics

Date	Opponent	Time
Jan. 6	Meet The Team (Exh.)	7:30
Jan. 13	@ Auburn	8:00
Jan. 19	Penn State	7:30
Jan. 19	Nebraska	7:30
Jan. 27	Florida	7:30
Feb. 2	@ Georgia	6:00
Feb. 10	@ Kentucky	6:00
Feb. 16	Massachusetts	7:30
Feb. 23	@ LSU	7:30
March 1	Georgia	7:30
March 10	Corvette Cup @ Columbia, Mo.	
March 16	Auburn	7:30
March 29	SEC Championships @ Lexington	
April 13	NCAA Regionals @ Baton Rouge	
April 25-	NCAA Championships @ Tuscaloosa	

Times are central

Men's Indoor Track

Date	Event
Jan. 20	Arkansas State Invitational @ Jonesboro, Ark.
Jan. 27	LSU Invitational @ Baton Rouge
Feb. 3	Wildcat Classic @ Lexington
Feb. 11	Barnett Bank Invitational @ Gainesville, Fla.
Feb. 24-25	SEC Championships @ Lexington
Feb. 29	Florida Fast Times @ Gainesville
March 1-2	USATF Championships @ Atlanta
March 8-9	NCAA Championships @ Indianapolis, Ind.

Women's Indoor Track

Date	Event
Jan. 20	Arkansas State Invitational @ Jonesboro, Ark.
Jan. 27	LSU Invitational @ Baton Rouge
Feb. 3	Wildcat Classic @ Lexington
Feb. 11	Barnett Bank Invitational @ Gainesville, Fla.
Feb. 24-25	SEC Championships @ Lexington
Feb. 29	Florida Fast Times @ Gainesville
March 1-2	USATF Championships @ Atlanta
March 8-9	NCAA Championships @ Indianapolis, Ind.

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